FOREWORD

Revolutionary and path-finding thinkers in history have usually been followed by mere interpreters, systematisers, analysts. There have been rare exceptions, such as Rosa Luxemburg and Lenin in the case of Marx. Vinoba is such an exception in the case of Gandhi. The others, and I include myself among them, have elaborated, elucidated and interpreted, particularly in terms of conditions and problems of independent India and of the world since Gandhi. But Vinoba has experimented and innovated, thereby saving Gandhian thought from becoming pontifical and authoritative and preserving its creative adventurousness (boldness).

Dr. Tandon has done a signal service to Gandhian scholarship and research by meticulously tracing the development of Sarvodaya philosophy since the time of Gandhiji. As this is his doctoral dissertation, it has the inevitable structural and stylistic shortcomings that appear to be impossible for a 'thesis' writer to avoid. But for the painstaking research that Dr. Tandon has done in a subject that is of much more than merely intellectual interest, I have nothing but admiration. I only wish he had been more critical of his material. But he obviously combines the scholar's objectivity with the believer's insight. Even so, his work is sufficient to show the weakness and lacunae in Sarvodaya philosophy. In several spheres, it is still in the stage of generalities, even slogans. It is for this reason that when faced with tasks that require detailed and concrete treatment, such as to produce a constructive critique of the Five Year Plan, the votaries of that philosophy—and I am not excluding myself—find it difficult to make a mark. I hope, therefore, that apart from providing a solid basis for further study and research in this field, by holding a mirror to us Gandhians, it should compel us to do our thinking in greater depth.

Jayaprakash Narayan

PREFACE

The contemporary Sarvodaya philosophy has attracted world-wide attention and many have recognized its importance for the afflicted world. The late Professor G. D. H. Cole saw in it 'the nearest approach to the ideal for which he stood', while Ellsworth Bunker, a former U. S. Ambassador at New Delhi, wrote in 1960, 'Although the Bhoodan movement and Sarvodaya have developed along the dusty roads of the Indian countryside, the implications of the Acharya's (Vinoba's) philosophy have great political meaning in the international scene.' The Sarvodaya thinkers themselves are of the view that Sarvodaya is the only alternative to communism, and according to Vinoba, it 'is the sea wherein all the rivers of the various 'isms' shall have to merge and give up their identity'. Though it is a philosophy rooted in the soil of India, being essentially Indian in its origin and background, it attempts to assimilate all that is best in western thought and practice. This is what imparts to it a world-wide significance. But so far there is no systematic and detailed work about it so as to satisfy the desire of many, both here in India and elsewhere, to have an authentic knowledge of it. This book constitutes an attempt to satisfy this need, specially with regard to its social and political philosophy.

It describes the basic ideas of Sarvodaya, the picture of the society envisaged by the present-day thinkers and their technique of realising it. Herein it has also been discussed how far they have further evolved the philosophy of Gandhiji and if there have been deviations from him. It, however, does not deal with the rise and growth of the Sarvodaya movement after Gandhiji, though for the purpose of elucidation and analysis, references have been made. It is concerned with the school of thought as a whole and therefore it does

not deal wth individual thinkers separately, but with the evolution of that philosophy as an organic whole due to their cumulative efforts. Naturally, some difficulties arise in such treatment when they differ amongst themselves. These differences have been pointed out and discussed in the light of their fundamental ideas.

The book is based on the dissertation submitted by me to the University of Agra for the degree of Ph. D. in Political Science and accepted by it. While giving the thesis its present form, I took advantage of the suggestions made to me for improvements and omitted the references from 'Introduction' and the first two chapters unless they were considered indispensable for one reason or another. For other chapters, which are directly concerned with the subject of this book, all references have been retained. The chapter on 'The Legacy of Gandhiji' is based on his original writings including very recent publications unless acknowledged otherwise. It is hoped that the book, in its present form, would appeal to the general reader without, in any way, losing its value for the student and the specialist.

My attraction for Gandhian philosophy is more than thirty years old, and during this period I had several opportunities of staying at Sevagram Ashram while Gandhiji lived there and at Paunar (Wardha) with Vinobaji. From the latter I even learnt much about his ideas. This contact drew me further towards Sarvodaya philosophy and I got acquainted with some other leading Sarvodaya thinkers and many other Sarvodaya workers, which, I believe, has given me a clearer conception of the present-day Sarvodaya thought.

In the course of my study and the preparation of this book, I have received the help of many. But the one whose memory constantly recurs to my mind is the late Dr. Gopinath Dhawan, the well-known author of 'The Political Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi'. He supervised my research work till his death in August, 1960.

My gratefulness to him is more than I can express in words. I am also thankful to Dr. G. P. Mehrotra, Head of the Department of Political Science, Bareilly College, Bareilly, who supervised my work after the death of Dr. Dhawan, to Vice-Principal Rajnath Mehrotra and Professor Krishna of K. G. K. College, Moradabad, to Dr. P. N. Mehrotra of V. S. S. D. College, Kanpur, and to several other friends and colleagues of mine for their assistance and encouragement.

Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, the well-known Indian leader, has been very kind to write 'Foreword' for this book. I am extremely grateful to him. I am also obliged to Sri Siddharaj Dhadda for his various suggestions regarding the matter of this book. However, for its defects and the views expressed herein, the responsibility is solely mine.

Vishwanath Tandon

THE SOCIAL AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

OF

SARVODAYA AFTER GANDHIJI

INTRODUCTION

The three words 'Satyagraha' 'Sarvodaya' and 'Anasakti' (non-attachment), convey Gandhiji's whole philosophy of individual and social life. Of these the first two words are his own, though the second word 'Sarvodaya', which indicates his social ideal has been found in an old Jain text.* It literally means the welfare or the uplift of all, but it implies, as interpreted by Gandhiji and his followers, a balanced all-round well-being and development of the whole man and similar development of all men. It stands for human considerations outweighing all else, whether in the economic, social or political sphere. This is the very significance of the parable on which John Ruskin based his book 'Unto This Last', which had influenced Gandhiji to the extent that he paraphrased its central idea under the title of 'Sarvodaya'. That is how the word came to be used for the first time by him. Subsequently, the monthly organ of Gandhi Seva Sangh, started in 1938, was also named 'Sarvodaya'. Its object was to analyse, discuss and develop the philosophy fundamental to the culture advocated by Gandhiji. In his message to the first issue of the magazine, Gandhiji had spoken of 'the objective of Sarvodaya'. Thus the word came to indicate his approach during his own life-time.

However, it did not gain much prominence. The other word 'Satyagraha' attracted greater attention and gained much wider currency as indicative of his basic view-point and his philosophy came to be named as the 'Philosophy of Satyagraha'. This was natural. First, Gandhiji regarded his own life as 'experiments with truth', and 'Satyagraha', literally meaning 'insistence on truth', was basically indicative of his whole attitude. Secondly,

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* When Gandhiji used this word for the first time, he was not aware that the word had already been used in the same sense by Samant Bhadra hundreds of years ago. (Vinoba : Nagar Abhiyan, p. 197).

1642

'Satyagraha', as the name for his method of non-violent resistance, greatly appealed to the world in search of a peaceful method for resolving national and international differences. Thus this word acquired greater vogue. But after the death of Gandhiji, the word Sarvodaya came into greater prominence, when his fellow-workers assembled at Sevagram (Wardha) in March, 1948, and decided to form an organization named 'Sarvodaya Samaj'. This name was chosen in preference to that of 'Satyagraha Mandal' (Satyagraha Circle) because the word 'Satyagraha' had come to acquire a restricted meaning which did not include constructive work. Since then the school of thought which accepts Gandhiji's philosophy in all its aspects and of which the central figure is Vinoba Bhave, has come to be known as the 'Sarvodaya School' and its philosophy as the 'Sarvodaya Philosophy'. However, it would be more appropriate to consider Gandhiji's own philospophy to be a part of the Sarvodaya philosophy as a whole, and this is the point of view adopted here. Its merit is to maintain and to indicate the continuity of the whole thought.

Gandhiji was a great revolutionary thinker, who preached that the dealings between groups and nations should also be governed by those very principles of morality which are prescribed for individuals. He announced the value of limitless principles of truth and love of fellow-men as the only basis for establishing right human fellowship. In the words of B. Landheer, "In a world of increasing complexity he preached simplicity; in a world of increasing confusion he pointed to the simple qualities of character in which the solution might lie; in a world devoted to material goals he clearly showed their limitations; in a period of urbanization he showed that decentralization meets other and more important needs than material gains can offer."[1]

Such was the tradition left behind by Gandhiji. But he had always been an experimentalist himself, and consistently with it he intended to leave no sect after him. He even said, "If I were to know after my death, that what I

stood for had degenerated into sectarianism, I shall be deeply pained......you are no followers but fellow-students, fellow-pilgrims, fellow-seekers, fellow-workers."[2] What was only essential to his thought were the twin principles of truth and non-violence. He, however, expected his followers to carry on his work after his death, and he had a firm faith that if there was anything in his message, it would not die with him.

The death of Gandhiji marked the close of an era. The much longed for and sought after freedom from the rule of the British had been secured. But it was not enough. The independence of his conception had not yet come, and he left it to his fellow-workers to reconstruct society on the lines indicated by him. These workers were divisible into two groups. One group had only accepted his political leadership. With them non-violence was a policy and not a creed. The other group had accepted the whole of his thought, his philosophical assumptions and ethical principles, his view of the state and the picture of his ideal social order. It consisted mostly of those who had been busy in various items of constructive work during the life-time of their master. The responsibility of fulfilling the unaccomplished work of Gandhiji fell on them.

The situation was new, and with Gandhiji no more to guide, they had to use their own resourcefulness in applying the principles and technique they had learnt from him to the immediate national and international problems of free India. In all this, they have naturally evolved his philosophy, and this development has been specifically occasioned by the Sarvodaya movement of which the most important part is the Bhoodan or the Land-gift movement started by Acharya Vinoba in 1951. This movement and its philosophy has attracted attention all over the world and fascinated even some prominent foreign intellectuals and many unknown commoners besides the men in the pacifist movements. It is this present-day Sarvodaya philosophy which is the subject matter of this book.

The important thinkers of this school are Vinoba Bhave (b. 1895), Kishorlal Ghanshyam Mashruwala (1890-1952), J. C. Kumarappa (1892-1961), Kaka Kalelkar (b. 1885), Dada Dharmadhikari (b. 1899), Shankerrao Deo (b. 1895), Dhirendra Mazumdar (b. 1899), Jayaprakash Narayan (b. 1902) and J. B. Kripalani (b. 1888). All of them except Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, had been closely associated with Gandhiji in his constructive work. Most of them had acquired during the life-time of Gandhiji some prominence both as original thinkers and as interpreters of his thought, and as such their ideas cannot all be strictly considered as post-Gandhian. What rather happens after the death of Gandhiji is that their thoughts come into greater prominence due to the Sarvodaya movement and the growth of the movement leads to their further elucidation and development. Hence we are not only concerned with their post-Gandhian speeches and writings, but also with those of the Gandhian period. Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, of course, came late into the field and while Gandhiji lived, he was a Marxian. Besides these prominent persons, there are several others who deserve study as either interpreters of Gandhiji or of the above prominent lights.

Of the prominent thinkers, Vinoba Bhave is regarded as the moral and spiritual heir of Gandhiji, who had a very high opinion of him. He told C. F. Andrews in 1917, "He (Vinoba) is one of the few pearls in the Ashram. They do not come like others to be blessed by the Ashram, but to bless it, not to receive but to give."[3] He also once wrote to Vinobaji's father, "Your son has acquired at so tender an age such high spiritedness and asceticism as took of me years of patient labour to attain."[4] He expected Vinobaji to be an instrument of great service, and deemed him capable of writing on 'the science of Satyagraha'. He chose him as the first satyagrahi for the Individual Satyagraha of 1940, and thus brought him into limelight as the 'ideal Satyagrahi'.

His authority to represent to Gandhiji has been recognized by other close associates of Gandhiji. Sri K. G.

Mashruwala observed in March, 1948, "We hold that Vinoba has understood best the principles of Bapu. Therefore, our faith in him is the highest."[5] Kaka Kalelkar is of opinion that "Vinoba Bhave represents the high-water mark of the Gandhian way of life and the Gandhian technique of rebuilding society".[6] Acharya Kripalani says, "I have always considered Sri Vinoba as a great exponent of Gandhian philosophy."[7]

But Vinoba is no mere interpreter of Gandhiji. He is an original thinker with a simple and lucid style tinged with subtle humour. According to his own admission, Gandhiji was not the only person to influence him, and he does not claim to represent him. He rarely speaks of Gandhiji in public and has his own dignity, emphasis and method. In the words of Hallam Tennyson, "Like a candle lit at a neighbouring flame, he now burns with a steady and separate light."[8] Such is Vinoba Bhave, the undisputed leader of the Sarvodaya workers and thinkers.

Sri K. G. Mashruwala had been associated with Gandhiji since the latter's return from South Africa. He worked first as Secretary and then as President of Gandhi Seva Sangh, an organization dedicated to the ideals of Gandhiji. He had come to be looked upon as an important interpreter of Gandhiji's ideas during the latter's own life-time. Dr. Rajendra Prasad considered him as "one of the acutest students of Gandhian philosophy and whose close association with Gandhiji gives his words an authority which may not be disregarded".[9] That was why, in spite of his poor health, he had to shoulder the task of editing the Harijan Weeklies after the death of Gandhiji. He was an independent thinker, who did not hesitate to express his differences with Gandhiji, and he valued his opinions highly.

Prof. J. C. Kumarappa had taught at Gujrat Vidyapith (1929-31), and had been the Secretary of All India Village Industries Association from 1934 to 1948, and then its President after the death of Gandhiji. He was a very stimulating thinker. Kaka Kalelkar writes of him, "Upon Kumarappa fell the mantle of the interpreter and

organizer of Gandhian economics of non-violence. Kumarappa's books and writings on economics have considerably moulded the minds of young India and specially of constructive workers. Gandhiji gave his ideas on economics to young India. It was Kumarappa, however, who gave scientific interpretation in a manner acceptable to the educated community."[10] However, Kumarappa was an extremist, and many came to regard him as an impractical theorist. But he had a living faith in non-violence and the Gandhian way of life.

Kaka Kalelkar also had been a close associate of Gandhiji. Before joining him, he was at Shantiniketan, the educational insititution of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore. Later on he joined Gandhiji and subsequently became the Principal of Gujrat Vidyapith. He moved to Wardha later on and edited Sarvodaya—a Hindi monthly—to which reference has already been made, from 1938 to 1942. He now resides at New Delhi and edits a Hindi fortnightly, 'Mangal Prabhat.' Kakaji is chiefly interested in cultural problems, but he is regarded as an elder authority on Gandhian philosophy. Hence, though he is not much in the Sarvodaya movement, his ideas carry weight with all who attempt to follow the path of Sarvodaya.

Dada Dharmadhikari is a prominent Sarvodaya thinker. He was first the publisher and then the co-editor of the Sarvodaya monthly refered to above. Later on when a monthly of the same name was started in August 1949, he became its co-editor with Vinobaji as editor. Dada is a recognized thinker of the school.

Sri Shankerrao Deo had been both a constructive worker and a political leader. He had been the General Secretary of the All-India Congress Committee for a long time. He is now completely devoting himself to Sarvodaya activities and is reckoned to as one of the leading thinkers of the school.

Sri Dhirendra Mazumdar is an important leader of the Sarvodaya movement. He has been completely devoting himself to constructive work since 1921 when he left his studies at the call of the Non-Cooperation movement. He

became the President of All-India Spinners' Association after Gandhiji's death. He is both an acute thinker and a great constructive worker. As such he supplements Vinoba both in the field of practical movement and that of thought.

Sri Jayaprakash Narayan is the most prominent Sarvodaya leader after Vinobaji. He was one of the founders of the Congress Socialist Party in 1934, and since Independence has been reckoned as the most important political leader after Sri Jawaharlal Nehru. He joined the Sarvodaya movement in 1954 after travelling a long way from Marxian to Gandhian thought. But it does not mean that he ceases to be a socialist. He himself observes, " The same old beacon-lights of freedom, equality and brotherhood that had guided the couse of my life and brought me to democratic socialism, drew me onwards around this turning of the road. My regret is that I did not reach this point in my life's journey while Gandhiji was still in our midst."[11] This evolution of his thought makes of him an effective interpreter of Sarvodaya from a different angle.

Another very prominent political figure, who has in several respects a Sarvodaya outlook, is Acharya J. B. Kripalani, a former president of the Indian National Congress. He had been associated with Gandhiji since 1917. He also distinguished himself as a constructive worker, who founded the Gandhi Ashram in Uttar Pradesh and who inspired many young men to dedicate themselves to the cause of constructive work. Kripalaniji who had begun his career as a teacher in the higher seats of learning and who later on became the Principal of Gujrat Vidyapith, is also an intellectual. Gandhiji's high regard of him is shown by the fact that at times he consulted him on matters which might be considered to be purely personal. His attitude towards and his relationship to Gandhiji are clear from one of his letters to him. Herein he wrote, " I have moulded my life, such as it is, away from you. My contacts with you have always been political. I have never consulted you about my personal life. Yet you have powerfully affected my life for the better. I

cannot live in the light of the doctrines I have learnt from you. But intellectually I am convinced that humanity's salvation lies that way. I have, therefore, been a humble interpreter of your thoughts to others in more modern and understandable terms. My only ambition in life today is to continue to be such interpreter."[12] No book on Sarvodaya philosophy would have been complete without a study of his thought. His differences with other Sarvodaya thinkers have only brought forth further clarification and elucidation of the ideas of the latter.

Such is the galaxy of thinkers whose writings and speeches have been chiefly studied to discover the various elements of the Sarvodaya philosophy of the post-Gandhian period.

CHAPTER I

THE LEGACY OF GANDHIJI

Gandhiji was a moral and spiritual genius and had a rare combination of both thought and action in him. But he was a thinker who had more of a preacher in him than of a professor. Hence he bequeathed no new system of philosophy in the academic sense. He only imparted a new philosophical outlook based on old elements. He himself said, "I have presented no new principles, but have tried to restate old principles."[1] However, in reinterpreting the age old principles in the light of the new requirements, he showed an originality of mind and a revolutionary spirit.

His one chief characteristic was that he was ever evolving, ever growing. As such, it is not difficult to point out inconsistencies in his ideas as expressed from time to time. And he also never cared particularly for them. He only wanted to be consistent with truth as he saw it at a particular moment. He conceived 'the science of Satyagraha' to be in the making and did not want others to imitate him or to adhere rigidly to what he said. As a result, however, of his experiments and writings extending over five decades, he left us a social and political philosophy which, though not expounded systematically in any treatise, is sufficiently detailed to form the basis of a school of social philosophy and to provide ample practical guidance for future.

Philosophical Bases

At the base of his whole philosophy lay his philosophical ideas and ethical principles, for his whole life was inspired by religion, "religion not in the sense of subscription to dogmas or conformity to ritual, but religion in the sense of an abiding faith in the absolute values of truth, love and justice and a persistent endeavour to rea-

lize them on earth."[2] He tried to introduce religion into politics. Naturally then, the nuclear element of his thought was his idea of God. He himself believed in God and considered such a belief indispensable for one who follows the path of truth. But his conception of God was a very catholic one. It included all those elements and aspects in which He could be conceived. At one time he said, "That Law then which governs all life is God. Law and the Lawgiver are one."[3] At another time he said, "To me God is Truth and Love ; God is ethics and morality ; God is fearlessness. God is the source of Light and Life and yet He is above and beyond all these......He transcends speech and reason."[4] This all-comprehensive conception was finally expressed as 'Truth is God,' and since atheists also believe in Truth, he included men like Charles Bradlaugh in the list of the believers in God. He, however, did not define exactly the relationship between man and God. Sometimes he spoke of God as Master and the ideal man as 'servant'; sometimes he looked upon man as the incarnation of God, but then he also cited with approval the Urdu saying, "Adam is not God, but he is not devoid of the light of the Divine."[5]

He believed that the ultimate aim of a man's life was salvation, the utter extinction of egoism.[6] It implied realization of oneness with the whole creation of God, specially with the whole of mankind. In other words, God was to be served through the service of humanity. He stood for the path of devotion and action.

He held that God, the Absolute Reality, could not be apprehended by sense and reasoning. What was needed was faith, which was a kind of sixth sense and worked in things beyond the purview of reason.[7]

Gandhiji believed in the law of Karma and in rebirth. According to this law, man is neither totally determined nor totally free. The freedom he enjoys is limited. Gandhiji also held that our past enmeshed us, but man was the maker of his destiny in that he could use his freedom in any manner he liked. He was, of course, no controller of results.[8] However, he taught the common man that

he was the maker of his own destiny and he must wrestle with both internal and external evils.

He believed that a man had in him a mixture of good and evil, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. But basically man's nature is not wicked and it was possible to arouse goodness in even the worst of persons. He said that " there are chords in every human heart. If we only know how to strike the right chord, we bring out the music. "[9] He held that man's destined purpose was to overcome the evil in him, and the most potent instrument for it was a heartfelt prayer.

To Gandhiji, the soul was immortal and hence death meant no calamity. On the other hand, it was a blessing bestowed by the Creator on all life. It was a grand event which should be regarded as preparation for a better life than the past one. For the good, it was a translation to a better state ; for the evil man, a beneficent escape.[10]

Ethical Principles

Gandhiji's conception of God and his view that the attainment of salvation was the ultimate aim of a man's life led him to stress the importance of ethical principles. He defined morality thus : " Our desires and motives may be divided into two classes—selfish and unselfish. All selfish desires are immoral, while the desire to improve ourselves for the sake of doing good to others is truly moral. The highest moral law is that we should unremittingly work for the good of man kind."[11] He was not prepared to regard any action as moral unless it was voluntary, performed as a matter of duty, and not out of any fear or coercion. According to him, true morality consisted not in following the beaten track but in finding out the true path for ourselves and in fearlessly following it.

He was of opinion that the principles of ethics and morality are eternal. Opinions change, but ethics do not. They embody all the rules of action conducive to public welfare. One of his basic belief was concerned with the relationship between the end and the means. He believed that anything attained by immoral means became polluted and undesirable, and that the purest of means was also the shortest.

Since self-realization implied self-purification, Gandhiji advocated eleven ethical disciplines, viz., Truth, Non-violence, Brahmacharya (Continence), Tastelessness, Non-stealing, Non-possession, Fearlessness, Removal of untouchability, Bread-labour, Religious Tolerance and Swadeshi. Humility was another virtue to which he attached great importance though it was not reckoned as an ethical discipline. Of these eleven disciplines, Truth, Non-violence, Brahmacharya, Non-stealing and Non-possession find even mention in different schools of Indian philosophy, but Gandhiji gave them completely a new interpretation.

Of these the first is Truth. Gandhiji said that Truth was God and he held that there was an eternal and Absolute Truth which was incomprehensible. To achieve it, one should purify one's heart and intellect and cling to what appeared as truth. Thus through relative truths one could reach the pure Truth. It did not matter if the truth one saw was defective. The very sincerity of the attempt would set one right. However, he held that it was not possible for any physical being to realise the perfect Truth.

The next discipline was that of non-violence. He considered it to be inseparably intertwined with Truth. According to him, non-violence was the means while Truth was the end ; and the means was of greater concern to us because if it were taken care of, the end was sure to be achieved sooner or later. Non-violence, as interpreted by Gandhiji, was much wider than mere harmlessness. It also implied complete absence of any illwill or hatred and it included even other disciplines named separately. But he was no literalist and considered non-violence to be the quality of the soul and not of the body. Hence he even conceded that sometimes it might become necessary to take a man's life. Perfect non-violence was impossible so long one existed physically.

It implied complete abstention from exploitation in any form. It was no cloistered virtue but a rule of conduct in society. It was a law of our species just as violence was the law of the brute. This quality, he held, could be acquired by training.

The third discipline was of *brahmacharya* (continence). In common usage, the word only implied cessation of sex action, but Gandhiji used it in its etymological sense and meant by it such conduct as puts one in touch with God. According to him, it consisted in the complete control over all the senses, and not mere physical control.

Brahmacharya occupied a place of honour among his eleven disciplines. He said, "Without Brahmacharya the Satyagrahi will have no lustre, no inner strength to stand unarmed against the whole world......His strength will fail him at the right moment."[12] Complete renunciation of sexual desire was indispensable for the realization of God, because one could not possibly divide his love for truth and God with anything else. But what he stood for was the sublimation of sex instinct and not its suppression. His ideal of a *brahmachari* was not that of avoidance of women. He did not favour segregation between men and women, but wanted them to meet on the level of son and mother, brother and sister. He had also realized that for most people a restrained married life was necessary, and on its basis later on a life of married *brahmacharya* could be built up. That is why he did not view marriage as a fall.

Tastelessness or the control of the palate was intimately connected with the observance of *brahmacharya*. It facilitated it. It meant that food be taken as medicine without minding its taste and only in such a quantity as is necessary for the body.

Then came the discipline of non-stealing. It meant much more than what is ordinarily designated as theft. Gandhiji even included in 'theft' taking something from another even with his permission, if one had no real need of it. Thus this observance implied a progressive reduction of wants. Gandhiji attributed much of the distressing poverty in this world to the breaches of this principle.

Closely allied to the discipline of non-stealing is that of non-possession. It extends the meaning of stealing to the possession of things we do not need in the immediate present. Possession implies provision for future, but to

Gandhiji it was a violation of love to hold anything against tomorrow for God never created more than what was needed at any moment. This principle applied not only to things but to thoughts as well. However, absolute non-possession was unattainable.

To those who already possessed, he suggested the ideal of trusteeship. The rich should not consider themselves the owners of what they have, but should regard themselves the trustees thereof and behave like a trustee. This principle was applicable not only to accumulated wealth but also to talents and abilities, which should be devoted not to selfish objects but to the social good. Through the application of this principle Gandhiji desired to establish a non-possessive, a non-acquisitive and an equalitarian society.

The first requisite for spiritual conduct is fearlessness. Without it the attainment of truth and non-violence, and the growth of other noble qualities were impossible. Fears, however, were of two kinds, external and internal. What was needed was freedom from all external fears—fear of disease, of bodily injury, of death, of dispossession etc. But internal foes we must always fear. These foes are our animal passions, anger, and the like. External fears ceased of their own accord when once these internal traitors had been conquered.

The vow of the 'Removal of Untouchability' was a resultant of the unity of all life. It meant love for and service of the whole world, and thus it merged into *ahimsa* It spelled breaking down of barriers between man and man, between various orders of beings. As such it had a wider connotation, though it was mainly concerned with the untouchability prevalent in Hindu society. Gandhiji considered it abhorrent alike to the spirit of religion and morality.

Bread-labour meant that everybody should labour with his body for his food and clothing. Gandhiji regarded it as a veritable blessing to one who would observe non-violence and worship Truth. It made the observance of *brahmacharya* natural. Of course, intellectual work was

important and had an undoubted place in the scheme of life, but one should not earn his living by intellectual labour. Bread-labour would also improve the quality of the intellectual output.

This ideal of bread-labour might be unattainable, but it was worth striving for. It would remove many of the existing ills of society, provide enough food and leisure to all, bring about equality of wealth and abolish all distinctions of high and low. It did not rule out division of labour. Labour in all essential occupations counted as bread-labour.

Combined with non-stealing and non-possession, it implied a life of simplicity. To Gandhiji, civilization in the real sense consisted not in the multiplication of wants, but in their deliberate and voluntary restriction. He wanted life to get simpler and not more complex. He knew that a certain degree of comfort was necessary, but held that above that level it became a hindrance instead of a help. Hence, he stood for rational asceticism. He once said, "I do maintain that asceticism is the greatest of all arts. For what is art but beauty in simplicity, and what is asceticism but the loftiest manifestation of simple beauty in daily life shorn of artificialities and make-believes. That is why I always say that a true ascetic not only practises art but lives it."[13] His own life was a living example of it.

The next observance was of tolerance or equality of religions. It was derived from *ahimsa* and from the belief that no religion was perfect. Hence the need for tolerance—which would make us accept the good features of other faiths and make our own religion a better reflection of the perfect Religion.

The last observance was of swadeshi. It was defined as "that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote."[14] It did not mean any narrow patriotism, but only recognized that the human capacity for service was limited and that one who pretended to serve the whole world while neglecting his neighbour really served neither the world nor his neighbour. This principle

as applied to the field of religion meant that one should stick to the religion of one's birth and help it grow to perfection by incorporating into it the excellence of other religions. In the political field, it meant decentralization of power and adoption of institutions native to the soil. Economically, it meant use of articles manufactured by neighbouring workmen.[15] But it did not mean any narrow-minded self-sufficiency. Gandhiji wrote, "To reject foreign manufactures merely because they are foreign, and to go on wasting national time and money in the promotion in one's country of manufactures for which it is not suited would be a criminal folly and a negation of the Swadeshi spirit."[16]

Lastly, there is the virtue of humility, which by its very nature cannot be an observance, since it cannot be deliberately practised. However, it is more essential than any of the observances. Perfect humility is a by-product of the complete annihilation of ego. Gandhiji held that a life of service must be one of humility.

View of History

Gandhiji's view of history is in keeping with his fundamental ideas. It has been called the 'non-violent interpretation of history'.[17] He read in history a steady progress towards ahimsa. He found it in man's progress from the stage of cannibalism to a civilized life, and thought that further progress in this direction was desirable if retrogression was to be avoided.

Gandhiji did not agree with the Marxist interpretation of history. He did not consider the culture of an epoch to be altogether a product of material environment. On the contrary he thought that as we were, so our environment became. The economic factor, though an important one, could not explain the whole of history. All wars did not originate in economic causes and accidents played important part in history. However, it was impossible for an individual to remove completely the effect of his upbringing and environment.

He did not deny that in some cases violence too had advanced society. He acknowledged the part played by

Subhash Chandra Bose in creating a new ferment and awakening in the army. But at the same time he held that a non-violent movement was more effective for bringing about progress. He objected to the method of violence on the ground that the good it appeared to do was only temporary, while the evil it did was permanent. He felt that as a remedy it was worse than the disease it sought to cure. He wrote, " History teaches one that those who have, no doubt with honest motives, ousted the greedy by using brute force against them, have, in their turn, become a prey to the disease of the conquered. "[18]

He thought that the key to social transformation lay with the individuals. He said, " We are the cause and makers of our surroundings ; no body else. To know oneself, to know one's hidden feelings and to correct them is the key to setting right one's surroundings. "[19] A beginning was always made by a few, even one. A revolution by the elite paved the way for the revolution of the masses, and such a non-violent method was both swifter and nobler.

To Gandhiji, the individual was one supreme consideration. He disliked things which struck at individuality, the root of all progress. But he did not believe in unrestricted individualism. He wrote in 1939, " I value individual freedom but you must not forget that man is essentially a social being. He has risen to his present status by learning to adjust his individualism to the requirements of social progress. Unrestricted individualism is the law of the beast of the jungle. We have learnt to strike the mean balance between individual freedom and social restraint. Willing submission to social restraint for the sake of the well-being of the whole society, enriches both the individual and the society of which one is a member. "[20] Thus while he wanted society to respect the freedom of the individual, he taught him that his own good lay in the good of society. He did not think that there could be any antithesis between the individual and society, and that was why he could think in terms of the welfare of all as against the greatest good of the greatest number.

2

To him, a life of sacrifice was the pinnacle of art and while self-indulgence led to destruction, renunciation led to immortality. He taught individuals to realize themselves through the service of their fellow-beings.

The Ideal Society

Gandhiji left us no definite and detailed picture of his ideal society. However, rough outlines can be made out from his writings. His view of the state was that it represented violence in a concentrated and organized form and it could never be weaned away from violence to which it owed its very existence. Hence he disliked increase in the power of the state and his politiclal ideal was a state of enlightened anarchy in which every man was his own ruler, and ruled himself in a manner that he was never a hindrance to his neighbours.

But all this is an ideal, which like Euclid's line ever remains unrealizable, though it is always better to try to approach it. Hence, as a practical man, he did not plead for the total abolition of the state, but worked for a predominantly non-violent state in which the government would be based on representative institutions. Gandhiji had expressed in 1925 his idea that only such adult male and female should have the right to vote as had contributed by manual labour to the service of the state. But it seems that later on he came to favour enfranchisement of all the adults. The political system envisaged by him was based on panchayats and indirect elections. The seven hundred thousand villages of India were to be organised according to the will of its citizens, all of them voting. These villages, were to elect their district administrations. The district administrations were to elect provincial administrations which in turn was to elect a president who was to be the national chief executive. The power was to be decentralized among the village units.[21] In other words, the greatest possible freedom was to be enjoyed by the village units and the larger territorial units were to be for the purpose of coordination and help, and were not to impose their will upon them. He had written, "Self-government means continuous effort to be independent of

government control whether it is foreign government or whether it is national. Swaraj government will be a sorry affair if people look up to it for the regulation of every detail of life."[22] Gandhiji did not favour imitation of western institutions, but a system suited to the genius of India.

He wanted candidates seeking elections to be selfless, able and incorruptible. He, however, attached much importance to the work outside the legislature and said, "True service lies outside. The field of service outside is limitless."[23]

Since Gandhiji desired to build up democracy from below, he favoured linguistic provinces. The state was to be a secular state, and the government was not to be based on the coercion of the minority, but on its conversion. In matters of conscience, the law of majority had no place and the majority should deal with the minority in a non-violent manner.

Gandhiji held that all crimes were diseases caused by social failings. He expected that in a non-violent society of his conception crimes would decrease. Still they would not be wiped off altogether, and hence some police would be retained. But its character would change. It would be composed of people believing in non-violence. They would be the servants of the people and not their masters. They would have some arms but these would be rarely used. In fact these policemen would be reformers, and their work would be confined to robbers and dacoits. In such a state there would be no place for capital punishment, and jails would resemble hospitals treating criminals as patients.

The state of his conception was not to be nationalist in any narrow sense. He did not stand for any isolated independence, but voluntary interdependence. He even wished India to die if it became necessary for the survival of humanity. He aimed at the welfare of all the races and peoples. He desired a free India to rush to the help of her neighbours in distress and he placed no limit to extending her services to neighbours across frontiers.

He wished the government of free India to promote a commonwealth of all the world states. He stood for a world government, but as a compromise was willing to accept a world federation, if it were built on a non-violent basis. However, he agreed that there might be a world police to keep order in the absence of a universal belief in non-violence. His patriotism included the good of mankind in general and he placed loyalty to God above loyalty to country.

He felt unhappy at the world's reliance on violence, and once remarked, "Mankind is at the cross roads. It has to make its choice between the law of the jungle and the law of humanity."[24] He was of opinion that unless the world adopted non-violence, it would spell certain suicide for mankind. In 1939 he even urged the democratic powers to disarm themselves.

Gandhiji's ideal society is characterized by equality in every sphere. Ideally, he stood for equal distribution, but as a practical proposition, he was for equitable distribution, that is, for approximate equality. The primary needs of all were to be met, and as far as possible, there were to be equal wages for all types of work. Such a society was to be based on the principle of simple life. Gandhiji did not appreciate the present mania for higher and higher standard of living. No doubt, a certain amount of comfort was considered necessary by him, but above that level it became a hindrance. In his ideal society, the law of bread-labour was to prevail.

Gandhiji stood for economic decentralization just as he stood for political decentralization. He regarded industrialism to be a curse. However, he was not so extreme in practice. He admitted the need and indispensability of some large-scale industries, but he preferred them under state ownership and he primarily stood for the revival of village industries. He desired villages to be self-sufficient in the primary needs of life. He, however, welcomed improvement in the cottage machines and did not mind villagers plying their implements and tools with the help of electricity. Thus in his economic organization machine

had a place, provided it was not permitted to displace necessary human labour. His attitude was to discourage the present craze for machinery, but to retain them where they were necessary and beneficial. He had no objection to simple tools, instruments and such machines as saved individual labour and lightened the burden of the millions. He considered that economics to be false which ignored moral values. He judged everything from the point of view of the well-being of an individual.

Since modern large-scale industrialism is advocated largely because it increases production, he advocated cottage industries which could lead to increased production without leading to the other baneful consequences. Cottage industries were specially suited to India with its chronic problem of unemployment and under-employment. That is why he said, " Pauperism must go. But industrialism is no remedy."[25]

He had other objections too to centralization. It needed violence for its defence and sustenance. High thinking was inconsistent with a complicated material life, based on high speed. There could be no world peace unless exploitation ceased, and modern industrialism depended upon the capacity to exploit others. Moreover, economic decentralization was essential for liberty.

Naturally, with such views, Gandhiji came to regard the growth of cities as evil. He desired the cities to readjust their lives so as to cease to sponge the poor village folk and make the latter all possible reparation. He, of course, did not want the existing cities to be depopulated. He had however, learnt from Ruskin that the life of a tiller and handicraftsman was the life worth living.

In villages his ideal was that none should possess more land than he could till. He favoured cooperative farming in which land was to be owned collectively and tools, capitals etc. were to be held in common. But this cooperation instead of being brought about by force was to grow from within.

Socially, Gandhiji wanted equalization in the status of all. No distinction of high or low was to be made in

work and the worker was to cease to have the lower status he had been having for centuries. He believed in the basic principle of the *varna* system and the usefulness of that institution. Heredity was a fact and children inherited the qualities of their parents, no less than their physical features. Environment did play an important part, but the original capital on which a child started in life was inherited from its ancestors. According to Gandhiji, the law of *varna* was based on the fact that every person was born with certain natural tendencies, with certain definite limitations which he could not overcome. This law established certain spheres of action for certain people with certain tendencies. Thus it avoided all unworthy competition and led to a cooperative social order for which Gandhiji stood.

However, the system as it exists today has certain defects. These were regarded by Gandhiji to be later day accretions and he wanted to purify the system of them. He considered the four main caste divisions alone as fundamental, natural and essential, and not the sub-divisions. He accepted no distinction of high or low. He was opposed to the prohibition of inter-dining and inter-marriages, though he expected that ordinarily marriages would take place within the same caste.

Just as Gandhiji made no distinction between man and man, he did not make any between man and woman. He did much to raise the status of women in society and held them in higher esteem because they exhibited a greater spirit of non-violence. He regarded men and women as complementary to each other. He desired the utmost freedom for women, though in this matter his was the middle way. He neither wanted to maintain blind orthodoxy and the purdah, nor to foster shamelessness and self-indulgence. He liked to accord women equal legal rights with men.

He considered man to be the cause of woman's fall, but felt that the remedy lay in her own hands. She should cease to consider herself the object of man's lust. He once said, "If I was born a woman, I would rise in rebellion

against any pretension on the part of man that woman is born to be his plaything."[26] Gandhiji was of opinion that an ideal marriage would be one which gave prime consideration to spiritual development and to the service of society. To him, the true purpose of marriage was intimate companionship and friendship, and that marriage was no marriage which took place for the satisfaction of sex desire. On the contrary, it must lead to a life of self-restraint. He was vehemently opposed to the use of contraceptives. He, no doubt, considered it a sin to bring forth unwanted children, but it was a greater sin to avoid the consequences of one's action for it unmanned man. He was not opposed to widow-marriage and even accepted divorce if it was unavoidable. Thus while anxious to reform society, he was no wholesale imitator of the West. His ideal society was imbued with the spirit of service, self-restraint, equality and freedom.

The Technique of Social Change

Gandhiji relied on two methods to bring about the necessary transformation in society. They were satyagraha in the commonly accepted sense of non-cooperation and civil disobedience, and constructive programme. The first represented largely the process of demolishing the present structure, while the second largely indicated the construction of a new one. The two, however, were no isolated processes and aided one another. But since construction was more important than destruction, Gandhiji attached much greater importance to constructive work than to satyagraha. While satyagraha or civil disobedience needed occasions for use, constructive work was always there for anybody to take up. He said, "If you make a real success of the constructive programme, you will win Swaraj for India without civil disobedience."[27] And at another place he wrote that the handling of civil disobedience without constructive programme would be like a paralysed hand attempting to lift a spoon. He considered constructive work to be preliminary to and a substitute for satyagraha. But notwithstanding all this emphasis on constructive programme, satyagraha proved to be more

attractive and was even acceptable to those who did not agree with his fundamental ideas and his view of the ideal society. They accepted it in the peculiar conditions of the country, which left no alternative to non-violent mass movements because of the disarmed condition of the people. Moreover, since Gandhiji was mostly busy in his life-time in fighting the British power, this weapon was developed to a greater extent than the other.

During the five decades of his political career Gandhiji conducted many satyagraha movements of different varieties and in different situations. He had, no doubt, to change the method and procedure to suit the circumstances, causes and problems that had to be tackled, and above all, according to the human material. The fundamental principles, however, remained the same.

Some of these were resorted to for the removal of specific grievances, and even those, whose aim was the attainment of independence, centred round some definite and particular grievances. A few of these were directed against society itself. He evolved his technique during the course of these movements, and he held that saytyagraha was capable of universal application and could get rid of all sorts of evils. He, however, did not claim to have discovered all the laws of non-violent warfare.

His satyagrahas took the forms of non-cooperation, civil disobedience, picketing, boycott and fast. All these could be either of severe or mild types, but all of them involved readiness to suffer and a faith that more innocent and pure the suffering, the more potent would be its effect. On the whole, non-cooperation might be reckoned as a mild form of satyagraha. It was based on the theory that evil existed because of cooperation with it, and non-cooperation would knock the bottom out of it. He considered non-cooperation with evil to be as much a duty as cooperation with good. Civil disobedience was a more severe form of satyagraha and hence it should be started only as a last resort. However, Gandhiji regarded it as an inherent right and in an evil state, a duty. He laid down rules for picketing and boycott and the limits that

should not be transgressed if they were to be non-violent. They, however, might be regarded as secondary forms of satyagraha. Fasting, on the other hand, occupied a central place in Gandhiji's philosophy of life. He looked upon it as a great weapon in the armoury of satyagraha and was not prepared to give it up because of its possible misuse. But since it was so liable, he laid down clear conditions for it. According to him, a fast could be undertaken by only one who was one of the parties wronged, who himself was guiltless of similar misconduct, for whom the wrong-doer had love, who was a man of purity and appeared such to the wrong-doer and who had no personal interest to serve. Moreover, the wrong-doing must have been patent, accepted as such by all and spiritually harmful, and the doer must be aware of its nature. There could be no fast for inferential guilt or for any act which was not accepted by society as wrong.[28]

Gandhiji was of opinion that a *satyagrahi* needed a living faith in God, for mere mechanical adherence to truth and non-violence was likely to break down at critical moments. According to him, a *satyagrahi* knew no defeat and was ever victorious. He was vanquished only when he forsook truth and non-violence. He must not show any impatience by taking extreme steps even before every other step had been exhausted. Satyagraha was not a method of coercion but of conversion by constant appeal to the head and the heart. A *satyagrahi* was always to regard the enemy as a potential friend, and hence he must avoid all intentional injury to the opponents in thought, word and deed. There was no place in satyagraha for any form of violence.

A satyagrahi's weapon being his soul-force, what was needed was capital in the shape of character. Quality was more important than quantity and even one true *satyagrahi* could bring about victory, for success depended on moral and spiritual rather than material resources.

Of fundamental importance in the practice of satyagraha was right thinking, and this required a clarity of vision. Hence Gandhiji wanted a *satyagrahi* to develop

a moral sensitiveness which could register deviation even by a millionth part of a hair from the ideal of truth and non-violence. The observance of the eleven ethical disciplines described earlier could help in it.

He held that satyagraha could only be undertaken for a just cause. Since the aim of a satyagraha could never be the humilitation of the opponent, but of winning him over, the methods adopted must be pure, and a satyagrahi must be ever prepared for a compromise, though it was never to be a compromise on fundamentals. The opponent was always to be provided with opportunities to reform himself and to retrace his wrong steps. Satyagraha could only be resorted to when the appeals and the like had failed, and the issue itself must be some tangible, well-defined and serious grievance of the community. At the same time it should be within the power of the opponent to yield. The demand with which the satyagraha was started should not be increased later on.

The first duty of a *satyagrahi* was to mobilize public opinion against the evil, he wanted to eradicate, by means of a wide and intense agitation. This was all the more essential in the case of a satyagraha against the established social values. Gandhiji realized the special difficulties involved in such a satyagraha.

A *Satyagrahi* needed discipline as much as an armed soldier. Only it had to be of a higher order and was not to be imposed from without. It had to grow from within. Though Gandhiji held that the first loyalty an individual owed was to his own conscience, he stood for an uncritical and unhesitating obedience to the commander in a satyagraha struggle. A volunteer was to exercise his reason when he chose his general, but after having made the choice, he was not to waste his time and energy in scanning every instruction and testing it on the anvil of reason before following it. His was 'not to reason why'.

Gandhiji was of opinion that in a well-ordered democratic society, there could be no room, no occasion for lawlessness or strikes. In such a society there should be ample lawful means for vindicating justice. But it did

not mean that he did not recognize the need for satyagraha in an independent country. He regarded civil disobedience to be the inherent right of a citizen which he dared not give up without ceasing to be a man. To put down civil disobedience was to attempt to imprison conscience and hence the right could not be allowed to be questioned.[29] And he wrote in 1930 "I know that if I survive the struggle for freedom, I might have to give non-violent battles to my own country men which may be as stubborn as that in which I am now engaged."[30] His fasts in the closing months of his life in Delhi, though intense prayers of a soul in agony, were directed as much against the government of India as against the public.

The second technique for building the new society was that of constructive work. It has already been pointed out that there was an intimate connection between constructive work and satyagraha, and that Gandhiji attached greater importance to constructive work. He defined constructive programme as "construction of Poorna Swaraj or complete Independence by truthful and non-violent means".[31] and it included eighteen items of work. But the list was not exhaustive, and some of the items had relevance only in the Indian conditions. The eighteen items were Communal Unity, Removal of Untouchability, Prohibition, Khadi, Other Village Industries, Village Sanitation, New or Basic Education, Adult Education, Women Education, Education in Health and Hygiene, Provincial Languages, National Language, Economic Equality, Kisans, Labour, Adivasis, Lepers and Students. All these items aimed at the service of society either by serving the people in distress or by trying to remove social weaknesses and evils. A few of them deserve special mention. Economic equality is one of them. Gandhiji called it "the master key to non-violent Independence." It meant abolition of conflict between labour and capital, the levelling down of the few rich, in whose hands the bulk of the nation's wealth was concentrated, and the levelling up of the semi-starved naked millions. He felt that a non-violent social order was impossible unless the gulf between them was removed. He wrote,

"A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and the power that riches give and sharing them for the common good."[32] Thus he suggested voluntary trusteeship by the rich.

New or Basic Education was another important item. Gandhiji had realized that a right type of education was essential for the building up of the new society of his dreams and for its maintenance. The ultimate object of his new scheme of education, as pointed out by M. S. Patel in 'The Educational Philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi' was to help all boys and girls grow into citizens of a new order based on cooperative work with an understanding of their rights, responsibilities and obligations in such a society, and at the same time into such individuals whose personalities had opportunities of balanced and harmonious development. This scheme, which was the culmination of his constructive programme, was based on two principles. First, that education should be woven round a basic and suitable craft; and, secondly, it should be able to meet the expenses of the teachers' salaries. Gandhiji wanted the teacher of the Nai Talim to be a craftsman educationist. His wife and children too were to be workers.

He stood for mother tongue as the medium of education at all stages and for secular education. While in general he had no objection to co-education, he disfavoured it for girls of fifteen or sixteen. He also thought it necessary to impart sex education to some extent with the aim that the boys and girls learned to conquer their sex passions. This made it essential that it should be taught by those who themselves had attained mastery over their passions.

Gandhiji had also expressed now and then his views on the post-basic and higher education. But he never directly took any interest in them. He wanted the post-basic education to be entirely self-supporting and the higher education to be supported by private people who felt its need. The state universities were to be purely examining bodies, self-supporting through the fees

charged for examinations. He did not like students to take part in party politics, but desired them to do social service work and, when need arose, to sacrifice themselves for the cause of the country.

The qualifications he laid down for constructive workers and *satyagrahis* were the same. They were to observe the eleven ethical disciplines and be humble. Their mode of living was to be such that they might be able to identify themselves with the masses. He often said that one must view one's own shortcomings by a convex lens, and of others by a concave. He judged a worker, as Pyarelalji tells us, not by his ability to draw a fine plan on paper but by his capacity to match his work to the human material at the moment and to fit his particular bit into the larger plan. A sound rule was to put out a few items which were within one's reach and capacity and to work them out in full while keeping the whole in view.[33] Gandhiji laid great emphasis on the one-worker one-centre principle, since it provided full scope to the initiative, originality and sense of responsibility of the worker. He wanted that workers should be able to work without any centralised direction and control.[34] There was no room for compulsion or coercion in any constructive work in view of the principle of non-violence.

He advised the workers to accept government aid only when it could be had without any loss of initiative and freedom of action.[35] He did not believe that any movement or activity that had the sure foundation of purity of character could ever be in danger of coming to an end for want of funds. He said, "I am convinced that lack of finances never represented a real difficulty to a sincere worker. Finances follow, they dog your foot steps if you represent a real cause."[36] He even went further and held that public should be the bank for all public institutions, and it was no good to run a public institution on permanent funds.[37]

He advised the constructive workers not to be drawn into power politics and not to contest for political power. He said, "I do not want to take power into my hands.

By abjuring power and by devoting ourselves to pure and selfless service of the voters, we can guide and influence them. It would give us far more real power than we shall have by going into the Government."[38] He had once opposed the idea of Charkha Sangh workers enrolling themselves as members of the Congress[39]. Addressing the constructive workers in 1947, he said, "Today politics has become corrupt. Anybody who goes into politics is contaminated. Let us keep out of it altogether. Our influence will grow thereby. The greater our inner purity, the greater shall be our hold on the people, without any effort on our part."[40] However, he could imagine a stage, when the people themselves might feel and say that they wanted the constructive workers to wield power. Then the question might be considered[41]. But his final words were, "Take all the living organizations with you. Purify yourselves of all dross. Banish the very idea of capture of power and keep it on the right path. Therein lies salvation. There is no other way."[42]

Such were, in a nutshell, the ideas of Gandhiji which he expounded to his contemporaries and bequeathed to his successors. It is on the basis of these that the present Sarvodaya thinkers proceed onwards, avoiding any needless repetition of what had already been said by him.

CHAPTER II

THE POST-GANDHIAN ERA

Every social and political philosophy is partly a product of the prevailing social and political conditions. It is both an expression of the times as well as a stimulus to its age. Hence any study of Sarvodaya must take into account the prevailing conditions of the world in general and of India, the land of its birth, in particular. It is all the more essential to do so since the sarvodaya philosophers are no arm-chair thinkers but practical workers dedicated to build up a happier society in which all kinds of tensions would be lessened and man would experience both peace within and peace without.

The World Conditions

The close of World War II in 1945 marked the end of an era in world history. It was in that year that the first atom bombs were dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki. The war weakened Britain and France, while destroying the power of Italy, Germany and Japan. It thus paved the way for the domination of the world by the Soviet Union and the United States. Before long, differences cropped up between these two resulting in a cold war which at times threatened to convert itself into a hot war. If it has not happened so far, it is only because the memories of the old war have not yet died out and because people fear a nuclear holocaust.

Another event of the new era is the resurgence of Asia and the revolt of Africa. It has been correctly said that World War I put imperialism on the retreat and World War II put it on rout. However, the revolt of Asia and Africa is not merely against foreign rule. There is a universal demand for social and economic justice, and the temper is such that if it is not satisfied peacefully, it will be satisfied through violence and war, a tendency which is

Further, modern industrialism has led to exploitation, imperialism and national rivalries, and these have been among the important causes of wars. The present day concentration and centralization of power is itself a consequence of it, and enhances the danger to world peace. The top political leaders of today enjoy far greater power than was enjoyed by the greatest autocrats of the past. The question of life and death of millions hangs on their decisions. Hence one of the most important political problems of today is of the taming and control of arbitrary power and unlimited ambition.

Another aspect of modern industrialism and technology has been the destruction of the traditional moral values. There has been a loss of faith, an intellectual and moral vacuum, an erosion of values and a loosening of the grasp of the meaning and purpose of life. All this has resulted in a denial of any distinction between good or bad, right or wrong. There has also been a loss of the sense of community. The word 'society' has lost its meaning, because the old intimacy, feelings of kinship, neighbourliness and interdependence have vanished. Relations between individuals have been reduced to those between living machines, who use each other. The old intimacy, no doubt, bred both love and hate, but now it has been replaced by superficial friendship and below the surface by distance and indifference. Thus as Erich Fromm points out in 'The Sane Society', the modern society consists of 'atoms', little particles estranged from each other but held together by selfish interests and by necessity to make use of each other. It is because of this that the modern youth behaves in a way as if he is not concerned with society. He is not even aware that anything like society or community exists.

The present system has also led to a complexity of life wherein the modern man feels helpless. The political social and economic problems of the modern age are too complex to be surveyable, and its consequences are deep and far-reaching. Being unable to grasp and understand them, much less to find solutions for them, the peo-

ple begin to follow those who can excite their emotions and give them hopes of a better world. Society is changing so rapidly that man is not able to adjust himself to it and consequently feels still more helpless.

The greatest pity of the present-day world is that though it is itself a product of the life of the mind, it is getting out of tune with it, for mechanization and industrialization are reducing man to a robot, corroding the life of the mind. According to Erich Fromm, we are not in danger of becoming slaves any more, but of becoming robots. We are governed by the anonymous authority of conformity. We have no conviction of our own, no individuality and almost no sense of self.[4] The net result is that man has become his own most dangerous enemy.

The way out of this crisis lies in a fundamental change both in the economic system and the prevailing philosophy of life. The change in the economic system must make the world more simple. It should make the human being, and not the machine, dominate the scene. It should emphasize cooperation and the sense of community, and should lead to decentralization of power. In the words of Bertrand Russell, "It is not only more material goods that men need, but more freedom, more self-direction, more outlet for creativeness, more opportunity for the joy of life, more voluntary cooperation, and less involuntary subservience to purposes not their own."[5] The new philosophy of life, as Lewis Mumford points out in 'The Transformation of Man', must be that of love, for without a positive concentration on love in all its phases, we can hardly hope to rescue the world from the insensate forces of hate, violence and destruction that threaten it. The new philosophy must also revive what is good and lasting in the traditional moral values. It must inculcate in men a favourable attitude towards work and it must inspire him with a sense of the unity of mankind and of neighbourliness. It should be a philosophy that would promote a zest for life. In short, what is needed is a reorientation of our whole life and outlook.

Conditions in India

(*A*) *Political Problems.*

The death of Gandhiji almost synchronized with the advent of independence. Freedom brought forth both opportunities and responsibilities. For long the Congress had denounced the British for depriving the Indian people of their freedom and ruining India economically, politically, culturally and spiritually, and now it had the opportunity of rebuilding the country. But independence came under such circumstances as to handicap greatly the Government. The partition of the country with its political and economic consequences created problems which demanded first attention. The martyrdom of Gandhiji, no doubt, weakened the forces of communalism in the country, but the refugees from across the borders had to be absorbed and rehabilitated. The Indian States had to be integrated, and the issue of Kashmir which had brought India and Pakistan on the verge of war, was continually cropping up. A new constitution had to be framed and adopted. And it was not all. The post-war world bristled with greater difficulties than had been experienced during the war. The shortage of the needs of life, especially of food, made itself more keenly felt. The problem of social and economic injustice clamoured for solution. The increased political consciousness in the people combined with the hopes raised by the advent of the Congress into power imparted to their solution an urgency which did not exist before. The long subjugation of the Indian people had deprived them of all habits of initiative and self-help, and they had come to look to the government to ameliorate their lot. And lastly, the bureaucratic machinery inherited from the British, while quite efficient in maintaining the status quo, could not easily be adapted to the task of initiating and carrying out a policy with a totally different outlook. The blood baths preceding and following partition made the government so dependent on this outmoded administration that it could not change it even slightly, not to speak of overhauling it.

However, it must be said to the credit of the Government that it rehabilitated the refugees, successfully solved the problem of the Indian States, assured the frightened Muslims of security, did not allow the Kashmir question to involve the two countries in any general or prolonged war, and it gave the country a constitution before 1949 ran out. Thus by 1950 these problems had been sufficiently solved to leave the Government of India free to devote itself to the long standing economic problems of the country.

(*B*) *Economic Problems*

Before examining the policies and efforts of the government for the reconstruction of the country, it is necessary to have a bird's eye view of the economic condition of the country in or about 1950 when the Government of India appointed the Planning Commission to take in hand the problems of poverty and unemployment. The country was then under-developed because during the British rule its industrial development had been regulated as far as possible to suit the needs of British imperialism. Yet the two world wars had given a great fillip to Indian industry. However, the major development had been in the sphere of consumer goods industries,[4] while basic capital goods and producer goods industries had lagged behind. The situation was that in 1951 out of the total population of 357 millions, 295 millions or 82.7 per cent of the people lived in more than 558 thousand villages out of which more than three hundred thousand did not have a population of more than five hundred people each. The total cultivated area was 324 million acres giving 1.1 acres of cultivated land per head of the rural population, of which 80 per cent of people depended on land for their living. Of these 22.2 per cent were agricultural land owners, 27.2 per cent agricultural tenants and 30.4 per cent agricultural labourers.

The whole agrarian system suffered from three weaknesses, namely, the existence of the functionless intermediaries known as Zamindars, Taluqadars, Malguzars etc.; the existence of a large class of tenants operating under distinctly oppressive conditions with regard to the

payments of rents; and, lastly, an uneven distribution of land on the one hand and palpably small size of the majority of holdings on the other.* Moreover, the seasonal nature of work on land combined with the dwindling of the village or cottage industries created under-employment both for the tenants and to agricultural labourers. According to the late V. T. Krishnamachari, a former Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, 50 million families in the countryside had no work during eight months of the year.

The poverty of the countryside is evident from the fact that in 1948-49, per capita income was 246.9. It was, by all standards, too low to provide even the minimum necessities of life, and then it was very unevenly distributed. Inequality between rural and urban incomes was very glaring, and the worst sufferers were the landless labourers of the villages.

Urban India also suffered from poverty and unemployment. No doubt, it had a greater share of the national income than rural India, but there too, there were great inequalities of wealth and income. The vast majority of people were hard hit by soaring prices, the price index having risen from 308.2 in 1948-49 to 436.4 in 1951-52. More people flocked to the towns from the villages in search of employment, causing keener competition for the unskilled jobs in the factories and domestic service. Since the end of the war, the problem of the educated unemployed was again raising its head. The partition of the country had only aggravated it and it was estimated that in 1951 thirty to thirty-seven million men were unemployed. Thus the whole economic problem in India centered round poverty and unemployment.

* 16.8 p. c. of holdings were of less than one acre each; 21.3 p. c. ranged between 1 and 2.5 acres; 21 p. c. between 2.5 and 5 acres; 19.1 p. c. between 5 and 10 acres; 16.2 p. c. between 10 and 25 acres; 4.2 p. c. between 25 to 50 acres; and 1.4 p. c. above that. These different categories of holdings comprised respectively 1 p.c., 4.6 p.c., 9.9 p.c., 17.6 p.c., 32.5 p.c., 19.0 p.c. and 15.4 p.c. of the total area under cultivaion (M. B. Nanavati and J. J. Anjaria : The Indian Rural Problem p. 77).

Government Policy and its Effects.

The reconstruction of the country could take either of the two directions. It could either proceed on the basis of Gandhiji's ideas or on the lines traversed by the west. On this issue the important Congress leaders like Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru as well as the rank and file had not agreed with Gandhiji, and as independence came in sight, these differences came into the open. At the All-India Congress Committee session called to consider the Mountbatten Plan Sardar Patel had pleaded, much against the ideas of Gandhiji, for the establishment of industries and for building up a strong and efficient army. Gandhiji had come to regard himself 'a spent bullet'. Thus even before his murder, it was apparent that the country was forsaking his path, and his death removed altogether whatever restraining influence he exercised on the government and the public. The people began to give up the habit of using Khadi cloth and other countrymade goods; simplicity in living was discarded and luxurious living came to be sought after. The policy of the government only helped in this transformation. India's sterling balances after the partition stood at Rs. 15,160 millions. But they were mostly spent on consumer goods and for other non-essential purposes so that by December, 1952, they had declined to Rs. 7,000 millions. The government also embarked upon a policy of industrialization, even encouraging the growth of textile mills. Khadi production was reduced at one time to one-fourth of what it was before independence and yet large stocks lay unsold. Conditions, however, have improved since then. The government has been compelled by the conditions prevailing in the country to help village industries and to provide bounty to Khadi. But the basic policy is still of large-scale industrialization.

In the field of administration, the Congress governments maintained a continuity with the old administration in woodenness, red tapism and waste. The gulf between the people and the administration, which was a legacy of the British days, remained much the same. The

only change was, and it still continues, that the administration had become more corrupt and less efficient. But the old Congress was no more there to raise its voice on behalf of the suffering people, Nay, it is justifiably believed that this corruption has even penetrated the rank of ministers, legislators and high officials, and they are very often guilty of undue interference in administration, and of patronage and actual corruption. The consequence of all this has been that the public failed to feel the glow of independence and at times became so despondent as to say that they were better under the British Raj. Favourtism in appointments and promotions has only encouraged the belief that work, efficiency, integrity and qualifications do not count at all. This combined with the desire for luxurious living fostered by the example and policy of the government, has only demoralized the people and made most youngmen unfit for any effort to build up the country. They have been attracted towards the material and sexual aspects of western culture without acquiring the social and the civic sense of the westerners and their habit to work hard. They lack attachment to great causes and exhibit symptoms of aimlessness and cynicism.

The advent of independence should have spurred people to new efforts, but, instead, the country lost all social dynamism it had during the days of the struggle for independence. No doubt, one reason for it, referred to earlier, was that a long period of servitude had sapped the native strength of the masses and killed their capacity for initiative. But it was not the sole cause. A very important cause was the failure of leadership. Gandhiji had inbued a life in this very material, and had the present leadership maintained the old idealism and spirit of service, they could have inspired youths to new efforts. This they did not do. On the other hand, the importance they attached to political offices and parliamentary activities—and this applied to opposition parties as well—made the public think that only those, who are in authority, can bring about a change. It has made the people all the more inert and dependent, and has added social inertia to general despondency.

This state of affairs has made the post-independence period one of great unrest. With no high ideals before them and with self-seeking all round, more and more persons have come to behave selfishly. Though subsided at present under the stress of the Chinese danger, the country has been exhibiting lack of emotional integration for the last several years, and the opposition parties have been fishing in troubled waters with a desire to run down the party in power. They have thus only aggravated the malady. The members of the ruling party too, anxious not to be ousted from power, have been compromising their principles. Some parties have even resorted to 'Satyagraha' to impress the public. But these were neither inspired by truth nor by non-violence. In the words of Sri K. M. Munshi, "Their objects have been to secure some group advantage through mass coercion. They have not been movements of discipline but of disruption."[6]

For this situation, the party in power cannot be exonerated of all responsibility. It has exhibited no sincere anxiety to secure the cooperation of others in its efforts to reconstruct the country. Congress leaders, who were once respected as national leaders, have permitted themselves to be reduced to the position of mere party leaders. Their false sense of prestige and adherence to the British parliamentary type of government have been mainly responsible for it. Mutual mud-slinging by various political parties has only disgusted the public, and it is doubtful if democracy has been able to strike very deep roots in the country.

(*d*) *Government Efforts at Reconstruction.*

Inspite of all the above drawbacks, the men at the helm have been making efforts to remove poverty and unemployment. Since 1951 two Five Years Plans have been completed and the fourth is under preparation. During this period attempts have been made to remove the weaknesses of the agrarian system by abolishing landlordism, by making the land tenure system uniform and simple, by making forced labour and other exactions illegal, by consolidating the holdings and encouraging

cooperative farming and by recommending legislation prescribing ceilings on land-holdings. Various schemes of development like the National Extension Service and Community Development Programme have been initiated. Democratic Decentralization has been launched to resuscitate the village panchayat system. Under these schemes the face of rural India is undoubtedly changing. Then there are the big river valley projects and attempts at large-scale industrialization with emphasis on heavy industries. All this has resulted in statistical terms to some 42 per cent increase in the national income, 20 per cent in per capita income, 30 p. c. increase in agricultural production, 63 p. c. in iron and steel, 324 p. c. in machinery, 114 p. c. in chemicals and so on. All this is, no doubt, impressive, but it has failed to improve the condition of the poorer sections of society whose betterment should have been the first objective of the plans. Official reports themselves show that the condition of the landless labourers, small peasants and craftsmen has worsened. The lower middle class and the industrial worker have been hit hard by inflationary prices. Unemployment and under-employment have not been reduced. It seems that the principal beneficiaries from the plans have been the richer classes, creating further social conflicts and cleavages in society.

The Development of Sarvodaya.

The entire discussion in the earlier pages points to two conclusions. First, the present day human society is sick on an unprecedented scale and needs much deeper remedies than have been generally suggested so far. The very values of life have to be changed, and the world trends given new directions. The present situation particularly demands love and compassion, a realization that our life must be governed in all its aspects by the law of non-violence and a recognition that life is more than food and drink. The world needs today a new philosophy of work, creative outlets for the energies of men, a new technology of production and such an organization of society as would lead to economic and political decentralization. Secondly,

the Indian conditions after independence despite all plans and efforts of the government have only sharpened the edges of class conflict in India. The problem of unemployment and under-employment has not been solved; the masses have not been aroused to self-efforts and the roots of democracy have not gone very deep. Moreover, in indiscriminately imitating the West, India is not profiting from its experiences. The philosophy of Gandhiji fundamentally meets the various needs of the age, all the more so when nuclear weapons threaten the very existence of the human species. It is in such context that the present Sarvodaya thinkers restate, elaborate and elucidate the ideas of Gandhiji and apply them to new situations. They took up this task soon after the death of Gandhiji, though it was after the birth of the Bhoodan movement that they made their impression on the public. This movement with its various off-shoots has provided Vinobaji and others to state their ideas and to suggest their solutions of the present-day problems in terms of Sarvodaya philosophy.

CHAPTER III

PHILOSOPHICAL BASES

Gandhiji's philosophical and ethical ideas had compelled him to participate in social and political activities, and this tradition is evidently maintained by Vinobaji, who had left home in 1916 impelled by the longing to attain Brahma or the Absolute. It was only later on that feeling attracted by the ideas of Gandhiji, he joined his Ashram. Shri K. G. Mashruwala too once took to solitude and some wanderings to seek answers to the metaphysical questions that troubled him, and he only returned to the Ashram when his mind had been set at peace. On the other hand, there are Shri Jayaprakash Narayan and Acharya Kripalani whose approach is primarily sociological and who do not concern themselves with philosophical problems. But no thought can be devoid of all philosophical basis, and beneath their thoughts lie, even if unconsciously, assumptions similar to those of Gandhiji and other Sarvodaya thinkers, who, with the exception of J. C. Kumarappa, are all Hindus and have been influenced by traditional Hindu beliefs. But their attitude is not of unquestioning acceptance. In the light of their own experiences and reasoning, they reinterpret these beliefs and sometimes even reject them. However, it is Vinobaji and K. G. Mashruwala, who, more than others, have developed integral philosophies of life based on certain abstract philosophical assumptions, and one has mainly to go to them in search of these assumptions.

God.

All these thinkers either believe in the existence of God or, like J. B. Kripalani, they do not find such belief to be unscientific.[1] Vinobaji is fully certain of His existence,[2] but he adduces no proofs for it since it is not a matter which can be decided by arguments.[3] However, the existence of God is capable of verification, for as K. G.

Mashruwala says, " God or soul is not an imaginary concept or hypothesis formulated for a purpose. To the most earnest and perseverent seeker, the faith in *atma* is a conviction born of deep plunges in the depths of the mind and beyond it, and is as much a conclusion based on introspection, observation and thinking as any other truth of science."[4] But such verification requires a pure mind and heart, and a prior knowledge of the self.[5]

All this is probably correct, for the deepest things of life are known only through intuitive experience. They are articles of faith and not arrived at by the ordinary process of logical reasoning. But this faith is not to be confused with any blind belief or superstition. Its sphere lies beyond reason and it does not supersede science on the question of matter and its properties. It would be a superstition to hold that the method of physical science can work everywhere. It needs a different kind of discipline to verify the existence of God. As Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan says in ' An Idealist View of Life ', " Our logical knowledge is a mixture of truth and error, for practical motives interfere with the unclouded thought. Unless the mind is set free and casts away all desire and anxiety, all interest and regret, it cannot enter the world of pure being and reveal it ." Mystics have unanimously felt the presence of the Supreme Spirit, and there is no reason why their experience be rejected.

Faith in the existence of God has also a practical value. To conceive Him as Father implies brotherhood of man; while the Hindu belief that all are manifestations of God leads to the oneness of the whole creation. Moreover, experience shows that faith in some invisible power or laws facilitates a life of service and sacrifice. Even a sceptic like Bertrand Russell admits, " If life is to be fully human it must serve some end which seems, in some sense, outside human life, some end which is impersonal and above mankind, such as God or truth or beauty. Those who best promote life do not have life for their purpose."[6] Humanist attempts to replace God by society and to have the above advantages are not likely to succeed, for as

W. E. Hocking has pointed out of such efforts in ' Science and the Idea of God' "The death of God leaves society in the place of the Absolute; and like any other potentate who falls short of omniscience as well as omnipotence, we realise that his pretensions are tolerable only when he is humble and recognizes a law above him".[6A]

But still it might be objected that the name of God has been used to exploit others and it has done more harm than good. Now first, this conclusion is based more upon bias than any statistical analysis. Secondly, as Vinobaji himself has pointed out, the fault has been of that conception of God which has imagined Him to be a resident of Heaven and as a merciful Father. If He is conceived as not residing at any particular place, but as immanent in all things and as the Objective Truth, no harm can accrue. Here it may also be added that the fault has also been of ' Organised religion ', which led to greater intolerance and rigidity of outlook and which became an instrument in the hands of powers that were. Lastly, it would be unwise to discard something simply because some have exploited it. The best of things have been misused, and if mankind were to discard them simply for this reason, nothing would be left with it. By discarding the idea of God, when the world badly needs some such faith, we would only be harming ourselves.

However, any true belief in God must express itself in our activities. Mere lip profession is no indication of that belief. An avowed atheist deserves to be reckoned as a believer in God if he possesses a loving heart, exemplary moral character and courage, both in personal and public life, and if his life is one of service and sacrifice.[7] A true worship of God is not a ceremonial worship, but a life consecrated to the living service of those in need.[8] To Vinobaji, "Belief in human goodness is the beginning of belief in God[9]". All this is in consonance with the Sarvodaya conception of God, wherein He is viewed as Truth, Love and Compassion,[10] and as the hidden principle of vitality in man which inspires, awakens and strengthens the good tendencies in him.[11]

World

These thinkers look upon the whole creation as a manifestation of God. That is why the best way to worship God is to serve the world. Thus they treat the world as real and not as an illusion. They hold that the world is governed by definite laws, and if it seems to us that there is some whimsical element governing the world, it is simply due to our ignorance of those laws.[12] They also consider the world to be on the whole a happy place. Had it not been so, life would have become unbearable. What looks like evil is only a foil to bring out goodness.[13] Most of the unhappiness is a result of the violation of the laws of nature, and it must be combated.[14] Thus these thinkers take no morbid view of the world.

Man

Man, a part of creation, is a manifestation of God. Vinobaji holds that all men share that light equally. If it is more apparent in a good man, it is simply because the glass of his lantern is cleaner.[15] Thus no man has a greater divinity in him than another, and none is so perfect as to be reckoned as God.[16]

In harmony with the above view is another of their belief that the physical body does not constitute the essence of an individual, who is the spirit within the body.[17] This view can be justified on two grounds. First, the fact that we sometimes repent our actions and find it even hard to imagine how we could perform them, shows that there is some consciousness in us which does not identify itself with the physical body. Secondly, men often prefer physical discomforts to comforts, and sacrifice themselves for others. This also shows that there is a realization in man that he is something other than the physical body. This realization is conducive to the development of an individual, which demands a habit of detached introspection. Moreover, attachment to the physical body results in externality and narrow-mindedness. It creates fear, while the feeling that we are different from the physical body gives strength. However, the physical body is not to be neglected, but fully taken care of. It is after all a

temple of the Divine, essential as a means to the realization of any value.[18] Only care is to be taken that it does not become an end in itself.

Death

This view combined with the belief in the immortality of the soul and metempsychosis, dealt with later on, have deprived death of all its terror for Vinobaji, who says, "Like sleep, death too is necessary. Just as we wake up from sleep and resume our work, our former *sadhana* (spiritual efforts) will avail us even after death."[19] It may also be added here that death makes us forget our past and this is in a way beneficial, for after death we are able to start life anew and untrammelled by old memories which often act as impediments in the way of our progress by checking us from rising above our old limitations.

Sri K. G. Mashruwala has also argued that the fear of death is not even justified in those who have no faith in immortality or metempsychosis, because, if rightly understood, death is a friend of life which helps to develop life just as life itself does. This is apparent from the life of the martyrs. By the manner of their death they help in the development of the wider life of society like any other activity performed during their life. Gandhiji's own death was his highest effort. It extinguished the fire of communalism raging in the country, and thus he achieved by his death what he was unable to achieve during his life-time. Therefore it would be a mistake to regard death an enemy of life. His analysis is that this unnecessary fear of death is due to two psychological factors. One is the dread of the unknown state or experience that might follow death; and the other, which is more important, is the existence of unrealized desires which make a man wish for a longer life. The first fear is baseless because if nothing remains after death, there is no valid cause for any worry at all. Moreover, such fear generally exists in the mind of those persons whose conscience pricks them for not leading a kind of life that they should have led. The second fear, born of a desire for a longer life, is a consequence of a wrong aim in life. If the aim has been sel-

fish and not noble, one would not have the boldness to face death courageously and peacefully. Even if the aim has not been selfish, one would not die peacefully if he has been eager to see it fulfilled during his own life. Hence what is required is that the aim, instead of being selfish and individualistic, should be altruistic and there should be no insistence on realizing it in one's own life-time. It should be such as to need for its achievement the efforts of many over a long period of time. If so, the probability is that one would be able both to live and die contented.[20]

It may be objected here that these are not the sole causes of the fear of death. Another and a more important cause is the feeling that one would cease to exist and one does not want to see himself annihilated. But it may be replied that this feeling is irrational and born of a wrong attitude towards life. If death is inevitable, as it seems to be, there is no use fearing it. On the other hand it would be better to be ever prepared for it mentally and instead of working for selfish ends to work for the good of society which survives the individuals. If one does so, he would not lament at all when death knocks at his door.

Human Nature

Intimately bound up with the immanence of the Divine in man is the Sarvodaya view of human nature. The present-day Sarvodaya thinkers agree with Gandhiji in regarding human nature to be basically good and loving. They are not unmindful of the evil propensities in men. K. G. Mashruwala finds the human mind to be a thick forest of good and bad resolves and feelings, and in most cases in a disordered condition.[21] Similarly, Vinoba does not deny the existence of evil in men and how can it be when the Gita itself speaks of both godly and demonic tendencies in men and preaches the need of the conquest of *tamas* and the proper direction of the *rajas*. But it is argued that they are not natural and normal, and that is why their victims always attempt to justify or explain them.[22] Only that state can be deemed to be natural

which one would like to maintain, and hence hatred, anger, envy, etc. can never be considered to be the natural qualities of man. The natural tendencies in men is to abhor violence and malevolence and to tend towards non-violence and benevolence. Even those who are given to evil tendencies love and respect goodness and nobility in others, and then there is in every man a moral force which controls his pursuit of worldly goods, comforts and pleasures. There is a limit he would never cross in any case to acquire them.[23]

The evil side of a man's nature is a result of some particular circumstances. It is primarily due to the wrong indentification of the self with the physical body, which circumscribes the horizon of his mind and out of narrowness of vision makes him act in an evil manner for which he himself feels remorse later on. It is this which explains ignorance, lack of self-control and the wrong social structure of society and social values, which are often held responsible for the wrong actions of men. The best way to arouse goodness in man and to strengthen the moral force in him is to have faith in him. Vinobaji says, "Even if a really bad person appears before you, think that he is the Lord Himself. Even the villain will become a saint."[24] Many examples of such conversions can be cited. Thus the view that human nature is essentially good and noble has a practical advantage as well.

This sanguine view of human nature, in spite of all criticism, is universal. There is none who ever loses complete hope in the reformation of his near and dear ones. Such faith in man is the very basis of education, which presumes man's capacity for cultural development. Generally, evil actions emanate from frailty and not out of perversity and depravity; and whatever perversity there is, it is more often a case of psychological complexes, born of wrong environment, upbringing and education. Lastly as Dr. S. Radhakrishnan pointed out once, "It is wrong to regard human nature as its very self when it is least inspired and not its true self when it is most".[25]

Evil

According to Sarvodaya philosophy, as pointed out above, man's real self is his spirit and not the physical body. Vinobaji further holds that virtues belong to the soul and evils to the body. The natural movement of the soul is upward, but it is dragged down by the heavy weight of the body.[26] This is quite evident as far as our evils of character are concerned. A life of selfishness or indulgence in the pleasures of the body is always a result of identifying oneself with the physical body. And this is also true to a very great extent of our external evils. The wrong social, economic and political conditions, if analysed, would be found to be due to the same identification of the self with the body on the part of individuals, groups, classes or nations. Many diseases are the results of excessive indulgence in the pleasures of the body by an individual or his ancestors. Many natural calamities like floods or lack of rains, are often the fruits of the disturbance of balance in nature caused by man out of his predatory instinct or the excessive desire for the physical comforts of life. Thus what Sarvodaya says is correct of most of the evils we are confronted with.

Many evils may even on closer examination be found to be no evils at all. There is a tendency in man to consider any event an evil if it in anyway disturbs his scheme of life. But it is doubtful if this view is justified. It may simply be due to our short sightedness.

The Aim of Life

The importance of a correct aim of life cannot be overemphasized. Following the Hindu tradition, Vinobaji also considers *moksha* or Freedom from bondage to be the 'noblest fruit of life', and he defines it as liberation from attachment, anger, desire and ignorance. It implies complete destruction of the ego, and becoming one with society and God-personified universe. It is like a drop of water joining the ocean and acquiring a much bigger shape.[27] And this state is not to be sought only for oneself, but for society as a whole, because an individualistic aim of life involves preservation of the ego and not its disappearance.[28]

According to K. G. Mashruwala, the ultimate aim of man is the purification of mind and heart.[29] He is critical of the ideal of *moksha*, because it has encouraged escapism and differentiation between worldly and other-worldly. He considers the attainment of knowledge (Jnana) as the highest objective.[30]

However, though differently worded, the views of these thinkers are not at variance. Vinobaji also lays full emphasis on the purification of mind and heart when he defines *moksha* above as liberation from attachment, anger, desire and ignorance. This agreement becomes still more apparent when the methods suggested by them for the attainment of the ultimate aim are studied. It is the common method of social service and the observance of the ethical disciplines dealt with in the next chapter.

Individual and Society.

The Sarvodaya thinkers cannot even conceive of any antithesis between the individual and society, for the whole creation is the unfoldment of God and there is no duality. What seems to be conflict of interests is remediable if its causes are removed. One cause of it is the wrong way of life. There can be no conflict if we properly discharge our debt to society, and regard ourselves as a part of the social whole. Those who are able to do so are looked upon by all as one of them. The second cause is that we are habituated to consider every problem on the mental plane. Such thinking obstructs an objective view of the problem since our 'mind'* is a product of past history and associations. They hinder us from understanding the other side of the question. If questions are considered on the 'supra-mental level', conflicts would disappear.[31] Thus the present conflicts are neither natural nor necessary.

Vinobaji lays much emphasis on the social aspect of man. He speaks of society in terms of social organism and thinks that the more an individual sacrifices for others, the better he serves his own good. But all this does not imply any unreasonable subordination of the individual

* Vinoba's conception of the mind, unlike that of the west, is of the Gita which places understanding higher than mind (Gita III-42)

to society, for he permits an individual to rebel if he regards it his duty.[32] Moreover, the Sarvodaya thinkers do not identify the state with society and, as would be described later on, they stand for such an economic and political structure as would not lead to any concentration of economic and political power. This would further safeguard the individual from tyranny.

It is also not denied that some part of a man's life is individual, and some is social; and while the latter is more extensive, the former is more intensive and its depth can never be exceeded by the latter.[33] But these two spheres imperceptibly merge into one another and a rigid separation is not possible. The dividing line oscillates according to the exigencies of the situation,[34] and therefore every age and country will have to draw it for itself. However, since the modern scientific developments have brought the people closer, a need has arisen to emphasize the social aspect of man. It is all the more essential in India where unbridled selfishness and individualism are playing havoc. That explains why Vinobaji speaks of society as an organism; but he is also anxious at the same time to maintain a proper balance between the individual and society and this he does by reminding both of them of their mutual obligations.[35]

In comparing society to an organism, Vinobaji is following an old tradition. The ancient Indian sociology rejected the individual and accepted the group as the unit. In more recent times Bipin Chandra Pal and Rabindra Nath Tagore* have also spoken in terms of social organism. Even Gandhiji was not free from it when he wrote, "The individual being pure, sacrifices himself for the family, the latter for the village, the village for the district, the district for the province, the province for the nation, the nation for all."[36] In the West too modern writers have not rejected wholesale the use of this analogy. But still it is a dangerous analogy. Ernest Barker, while

* Dr. R. N. Tagore says, "We have a greater body which is the social body. Society is an organism, of which we as part have our individual wishes. (Sadhana, p. 83)

not totally disapproving of its use, correctly says, "When we use the word 'orgainsm' freely, we begin to conjure with metaphor; we turn metaphor into myth, and myth into an idol, and we end by turning our human selves, which are ends in themselves, into means for the greater glory of the idol".[37] Vinobaji does not seem to be unaware of it for he constantly lays emphasis on a proper balance between the individual and society in his 'Talks on the Gita', which expresses his basic philosophy of life.

Religion

Its views of God and man make this school an advocate of the Religion of Man as against the present sectarian religions which are dogmatic and exclusive. According to Vinobaji, all the prevalent religions consist of four parts, namely, mode of worship, ethical principles, customs and mythology. Out of these Sarvodaya only values ethical ideas, which, according to Vinoba, are common to all the religions. He thinks that all religions preach love, truthfulness, compassion and the worship of God, and he regards these to be the essence of all the religions, and designates them as 'spirituality'.[38]

Sectarian religions have been the bane of the world. They have tried to check the growth of independent thought and have controlled men by means of fear. Sarvodaya, on the other hand, is a strong advocate of independent thinking and fearlessness. Vinobaji is of the view that religion in the sense of spirituality is not at all antagonistic to science. Their fields vary. While science is concerned with the external world, religion concerns itself with the inner world of men. Thus they supplement each other, and both can join hands provided religions discard beliefs disproved by science. Such a religion, however, is yet to be developed.[39]

Freedom of Man

The question of the freedom of man is one of the fundamental problems of philosophy, and in the Indian philosophy it is related to the theory of Karma which lays down that one must reap the consequences of one's ac-

tions. This theory attempts to explain the universe in rational terms and the law of Karma is in the moral world the counterpart of the law of conservation of energy that rules the physical world. But since it is evident that the results of our actions are not experienced in this single life, it has further led to the belief in metempsy chosis, which in Indian philosophy has come to be associated with the law of Karma.

This law of Karma does not support the doctrine of predestination or determinism. As has been pointed out by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, " Karma or connection with the past is not inconsistent with creative freedom. On the other hand it is implied by it".[40] And he further says, " Freedom is not caprice, nor is Karma necessity. Human choice is not unmotived or uncaused. If our acts were irrelevant to our past, then there would be no moral responsibility or scope for improvement."[41] Thus this law implies freedom of will, which is a necessary postulate of morality.

Both Vinobaji and Mashruwala explicitly accept the law of Karma. But they neither subscribe to the popular view that affluence and poverty are respectively the consequences of good and the bad deeds of the past life, nor to the notion that one simply bears the consequences of one's actions and not those of others.[42] Vinobaji also believes in rebirth, firstly, because he does not find it contradicted by modern science, and secondly, because it is a useful hypothesis which explains many events which would otherwise remain unexplained and which prevents a man from feeling despondent at his failures by reminding him that results in this life are not final and that efforts would continue in the next. But he also admits that life after death must remain a question mark.[43] However, it is in this context of the law of Karma that he has touched on the point of the limits of human freedom, and he is probably the only one among the present-day Sarvodaya thinkers to do so. He compares man to an ox tied to a post, the length of the rope determining his freedom of choice and efforts. According to him, our desires and actions of the

previous birth determine the length of the rope. But the effect of the previous birth is over once we have been born again with our limitations. The rest of our life depends upon our new efforts, and they would also determine our next birth. It is for us to increase or decrease our freedom, for God is no autocrat. It is not He who limits our freedom. What we desire we become, and He gives the rope accordingly.[44] Thus a man has in him the capacity to acquire greater and greater freedom by and by, and it is not all. He can even break the rope and free himself. Vinoba says, "We cannot go beyond the length of the rope, but we can surely break it. If we can annihilate our desires, then merging in God we become as free as He."[45]

Vinobaji finds nothing to lament in this lack of full freedom. Freedom is surely a postulate of moral life, but absolute freedom or complete indeterminism would make moral life impossible. The rope tying us is not for our slavery, but for the sake of our safety. Man needs both freedom and restraint for development and well-being.[46]

Vinoba's belief in metempsychosis does not lack support among western writers and thinkers, while his idea that affluence and poverty have nothing to do with the good or bad actions of past life of an individual finds confirmation in the great saint and philosopher Ramanuja. Similarly his view regarding the limitations imposed on a man by his actions of past life is corroborated by Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan. L. Stanley Jast says in his book, 'Reincarnation and Karma', "Reincarnation, with its complementary doctrine of karma, affords the best, in truth, the only working explanation of the mysteries of our life on earth. Without these illuminating ideas life becomes just a meaningless jumble."[47] Ramanuja observes in his commentary on the Brahmasutras, "The man who acts with the determination to be wholly on the side of the Supreme, the Lord blesses by creating in him a taste for such actions only as are a means of attaining him and are extremely good. But he punishes the man who

acts with the determination to be wholly against him by creating in him a taste for such actions as stand in the way of attaining him and lead him downward."[48] Dr. Radhakrishnan says in his 'An Idealist View of Life', "Life is like a game of bridge. The cards in the game are given to us. We do not select them. They are traced to past Karma but we are free to make any call as we think fit and lead any suit. Only we are limited by the rules of the game. We are more free when we start the game than later on when the game has developed and our choices become restricted. But till the very end there is always a choice."[49] He also agrees with the view that a man also suffers for the actions of others. He says, "It is utterly wrong to think that misfortune comes only to those who deserve it. The world is a whole and we are members one of another, and we must suffer one for another."[50]

Appraisal

These are the important philosophical beliefs of these thinkers. They are more or less of the nature of assumptions. However, they are not contracdicted by modern science and except on a few matters like the theory of rebirth or human nature, they express the deep convictions of the vast body of the peoples of the world. To the Indian people, they embody their age-long beliefs, even though they have been interpreted in a manner contrary to popular notions. These convictions amount in essence to saying that transcending our narrow and limited self, we must conceive of something higher and wider than anything we can think of and it must act as a pole star to guide our activities. In the world all are essentially one, and our attempts should be directed towards the realization of this unity, abolishing all sorts of distinctions, even the difference of 'I' and 'thou', of 'mine' and 'thine'. The world should be treated as real and no morbid view be taken of it. Instead of trying to escape from it, we must try to serve it. It can best be done if we regard ourselves more than the physical body, have faith in man even in the most trying of circumstances,

consider ourselves to be a part of the social whole and drive away feelings of helpless fatalism from us. Logic apart, there can be no difference of opinion on these. They are all matters of common experience, and one must accept their desirability and need.

In their attitude towards God and other problems the position of the present thinkers is quite similar to that of Gandhiji. The expressions vary, but the net results are practically the same.

CHAPTER IV

ETHICAL PRINCIPLES

The social and political philosophy of Sarvodaya is primarily concerned with the quality of individual and social life. In this respect it resembles 'humanism' which does not bother about our ideas of the ultimate nature of reality, provided we are prepared to act rightly. It does not, however, mean that to Sarvodaya thinkers the question of the ultimate nature of reality is of no consequence, but what they hold is that for the generality of mankind, the ethical aspect is bound to be of greater importance. A moral life is essential even for the attainment and maintenance of a spiritual life. According to Vinoba, the traditional belief that contemplation runs counter to action needs correction. Retirement to a solitary place may be necessary in the early stages, but it does not help in further progress.[1] He is an advocate of the life of disinterested performance of one's own duty or *svadharma* enjoined by the Gita. In other words, he prefers the path of action to those of knowledge and devotion. And this is so for two reasons. First, because the path of knowledge is only within the reach of a very few; and secondly because as long as self-realization is not attained, it is of the utmost importance that right actions are performed in the right way.[2] But there is nothing like a pure path of action, for without knowledge and devotion, there can be no purification of mind and heart, no discovery of one's duty and no disinterested performance of it. Thus all the three knowledge, devotion and action, are inseparable.[3]

Svadharma

But what is this *svadharma* ? According to Vinobaji, it includes all the duties of an individual. Some of them vary from individual to individual according to his age, time and place. One's duty at any time is one's *svadharma*

at that time, and it is only by discharging it that he can progress. There is nothing high or low about it, no question of the field of service being small or big. A duty is a duty and has to be discharged irrespective of any consideration. What really matters is how it is performed.[4]

Vinobaji lays down two principles to determine one's duty or 'Svadharma'. One is that since the very process of living involves the wear and tear of the physical body, society and the universe, one should replenish the loss caused to them by him and make one's life fruitful. This can be done by performing *yajna*, *dana* and *tapas*, which in common speech stand for sacrifice, charity and penance respectively. He, however, interprets them in his own way. To make good the loss, to purify the things used and to do some direct construction, all this falls under *yajna*. It is a discharge of one's debt to the creation. Similarly the payment of debt to society is *dana*. It includes attempts made to help society to progress. The function of *tapas* is to remove the defects and distortions that arise in the body.[5] The second rule for determining *svadharma* is to read one's own appetites and feelings, and to satisfy them in others. For example, since one feels hunger, and thirst, it is one's duty to satisfy the hunger and quench the thirst of others. Vinobaji thinks that these two principles can provide us enough guidance to discover our *svadharma*. The real difficulty would lie in acting according to it.[6]

A part of one's *svadharma* is fixed and unchangeable, while the rest is changeable. The examples of the former are truth, compassion, love, self-restraint and performance of physical labour. The latter may be divided into national (svadeshi) dharma, the communal (svajatiya) dharma and the dharma of the age (svakalin).[7] These three would vary from country to country, man to man and time to time.

In short, *svadharma* means to Vinobaji the service of the parents, neighbours and society, and keeping oneself physically fit. It includes participation in the productive activities of society. He does not identify *svadharma* with *varnadharma* or the duties of the caste, though the Gita

speaks of it,[8] and on this matter he is endorsed both by Sri Aurobindo and S. Radhakrishnan. The former thinks that the Gita is not concerned with the validity of the Aryan social order now abolished or in a state of deliquescence. If that were all, the principle of *svabhava* and *svadharma* would have no permanent truth or value. The latter writes, " The Gita cannot be used to support the existing social order with its rigidity and confusion. It takes up the theory of the four orders and enlarges its scope and meaning."[9]

Other Ethical Principles

Besides the principle of ' Svadharma ', a few other principles have also been laid down by Sarvodaya thinkers. Consistently with the principle of ' svadharma ', Vinobaji lays down the maxim of " Sacrifice yourself for others."[10] According to Kaka Kalelkar, morality consists of rules conducive to the welfare of man.[11] To Dada Dharmadhikari, good actions bring us nearer, while evil acts create gulf between us. And this is corroborated by Jayaprakash Narayan.[12] These various principles have also been accepted by several Europeon thinkers.

Ethical Relativism

Vinobaji by dividing ' svadharma ' into two groups, eternal and changeable, rejects the principle of ethical relativism, though he does not accept all the prevailing rules of morality to be of permanent value. He only says that the basic ethical principles which sustain life are fixed and absolute like the laws of mathematics.[13] Sri Mashruwala also holds that some rules of morality are products of geographical situations, historical incidents, particular social needs etc.[14] The same is the case with Dada Dharmadhikari, who discusses the question at some length. He objects to ethical relativism both on theoretical and practical grounds. The former objection is that everything relative must be relative to something, and hence there must be at least one absolute element to which others are relative. The second is that if all the values are regarded as relative, life would lose its very basis.[15] These views and arguments have also been supported by Pitrim

A. Sorokin, the well-known social philosopher. He writes, " The relative has meaning only when contrasted with the aboslute. Without any absolute the very concept of the relative becomes empty and meaningless." And he further says, " Thus our sensate society has lost any clear sense of what is right and what is wrong, what is lawful and what is not. The result has been a progressive moral and legal anarchy, nihilism and cynicism." He also holds that there are some permanent universal norms, while others have only validity in particular times and places.[16]

The present-day popularity of the theory of ethical relativism is greatly due to Marxism, which holds that each class has its own morality. Another reason is that absolutism has the tendency to lead to dogmatism, intolerance and persecution. It is thus an enemy of intelligent thought.[17] Now the Marxist attitude is not a correct one, for as Morris Ginsberg, the noted British sociologist says, " The main difficulty in defining this type of theory is that it has never been worked out in any detail. The moralities of different people are alleged to differ, but no one has ever set out how precisely they differ, or defined the boundaries of the groups which are said to be compared."[18] The very fact that Communist Russia has returned back to many old norms of morality in sex and other matters, shows that there is something of permanent value in them and that in certain fields the 'proletariat' and the 'bourgeois' moralities coincide. As regards the second argument, it may be pointed out that the theory that some norms have permanent validity should not lead to dogmatism and intolerance. It itself rejects any blind attitude of orthodoxy and advocates a readiness to test all the prevailing rules of morality on the touchstone of reason. Though there are some absolute principles of morality, one of them is of tolerance and humility. It is only thus that we can take up the correct position avoiding the two extremes and save society from their baneful consequences. After all, man's experiments have been going on for thousands of years and during this long period he has surely been able to discover few absolutes, essential both for human existence and his progress. Even

Bertrand Russell, who is a very ardent advocate of ethical relativism, accepts its invalidity when he writes, "When I am compelled, as happens very frequently in the modern world, to contemplate acts of cruelty which make me shudder with horror, I find myself constantly impelled towards an ethical outlook which I cannot justify intellectually. I find myself thinking, "These men are wicked and what they do is bad in some absolute sense for which my theory has not provided."[19]

According to Vinobaji, these absolutes are steadfastness in truth, love and compassion.[20] Sri Mashruwala puts them as not to do violence to human beings, to treat all men equally, not be sectarian, to avoid untruth, drink and prostitution, to observe personal and social cleanliness, and to perform one's duty towards others.[21] Dada Dharmadhikari would put them as affection, non-violence, equality and cooperation.[22] In short, they are Truth and Non-violence in a comprehensive sense.

Vows

These various rules or disciplines have been termed 'vows' because true and lasting morality is always self-imposed and can carry no element of compulsion. The present Sarvodaya thinkers attach great importance to the vows expounded by Gandhiji and to humility which was assigned a separate place by him. They are looked upon as guides to the right path in the absence of the master.[23] Of these the five vows of Truth, Non-Violence, Brahmacharya or Continence, Non-stealing and Non-possession contain the essence of all the spiritual reflection and meditation of the Indian seers of the past for the correct working of society. Others have either been derived from them to suit particular conditions or are necessary for the very observance of the primary five vows. Hence, addition and subtraction can be made as the exigencies of time and place require, and Vinobaji has added another vow of *aninda* (not to speak ill of others) to others.

Truth

The first vow is that of Satya or Truth. According to Vinobaji, truth is self-evident and defies definition.[24]

However, the etymological meaning of Satya, that which exists, is very pervasive. It would include the Ultimate Reality, the laws governing the universe and the agreement of expression with fact. In his Marathi 'Abhang Vraten' Vinobaji echoes the ideas of Gandhiji as expressed in 'From Yeravda Mandir'.

The search for Truth should take two forms. One is to act according to the truth as one perceives it at any moment. Thus anything, which appears to be our duty to us, even if it is mistakingly so, is our *svadharma*.[25] This vow imposes on us a duty of being truthful in words, thoughts and deeds. Untruthfulness is the greatest moral evil. It is the basic evil. Thefts, murders and sex offences are not so serious.. A man given to other defects of character can be a great man, but not one who is dishonest and insincere.[26] The habit of speaking truth does not need any cultivation. It is untruthfulness which has to be taught to the people by asking them to be worldly-wise. Lack of self-respect, selfishness and fear are the enemies of truth.[27]

The second form the attempt to realize Truth should take is to realize our unity with all life. Truth as a social value means that we are all one. This unity forms the bedrock of all sociality, morality and good conduct.[28]

Non-violence

The second vow of non-violence includes most of all other vows, for non-violence denotes a way of life and hence it implies a congeries of virtues or qualities. This vow is indispensable for the realization of Truth, since the supreme truth is the unity of all life.

The principle of non-violence has both negative and positive aspects. Negatively, it forbids violence which creates disunity and increases differences;[29] and violence has been defined as malevolence and hatred, revenge and enmity, murder or causing any other injury, deception and exploitation. It is the acquisition, re-acquisition and preservation of material interests by any means which the prospects of success may suggest.[30] Positively, it stands

for love and compassion. Love denotes joy at the happiness of others, while compassion prompts us to feel for others when they are in distress and to do something positive to relieve it.[31] In other words, it means loving others as we love our own selves, even if they bear enmity towards us. In more concrete terms, it means love and forgiveness, generosity and patience, peace and friendliness, civility and frankness, cooperation and service etc.[32] These two aspects together express the full meaning of non-violence, which is not only a physical rule of conduct but also an attitude of mind and heart. The present Sarvodaya thinkers emphasize the positive aspect of non-violence. While Gandhiji spoke of Truth and Non-violence, Vinobaji talks of Truth, Love and Compassion.[33] This change is due to the fact that the people living in a democracy easily accept the principle of causing no physical injury or destruction, but overlook the positive aspect altogether.

It is argued that man's normal leanings are towards non-violence and that violence indicates a distorted state of mind. It is always a symptom of something wrong somewhere. The present-day mood of violence in the peoples is a product of prevailing inequalities, the desire to avoid physical labour and the search for security and happiness for oneself and one's posterity. These lead to exploitation engendering violence on both the sides. However, this existence of violence does not mean that violence is natural to man. Kaka Kalelkar rightly observes, " Violence is the fact of life ; non-violence is the law of life. Violence sometimes makes for life ; non-violence is the fulfilment of life. "[34] And in the present-day conditions, non-violence is a dire necessity. The existence of violence in this atomic age can only result in the annihilation of mankind, while its replacement by non-violence would give us the full benefit of science converting this world into a heaven.

But it is not the only consideration which can be urged against the use of violence. There are others too, though not so compelling, which urge the use of only non-violent

technique to fight an evil. First, violence can never be the natural weapon of the masses, who, on the whole, are kind-hearted and peaceful by nature. Its use would only lead to the supremacy of those who have aptitude for it. And even if human nature can be so transformed as to make violence a natural method for the masses, it would only be a calamity for mankind to revert back to the old primitive state of barbarity.[35] Secondly, the use of violence always degrades men and gives them uncivilized habits. It gives rise to a reaction which is often worse than the evil sought to be cured.[36] Thirdly, though a violent revolution gives an appearance of rapidly brought about radical changes, society ultimately returns to the level of the order, it is fitted for in the process of evolution. Thus the so-called success proves deceptive. Experience shows that while violence does change society, it is not the change which was aimed at.[37] Fourthly, once violence is let loose, it is difficult to control it.[38] As against it, the non-violent method is superior in that it is scientific and better from psychological point of view.[39] It is a method which an individual can adopt even if others do not do so. It causes less of suffering and destruction. And lastly, it is a method which cannot be used to acquire or retain any unjust benefit.[40]

Inspite of these disadvantages of violence and advantages of non-violence, people still have a greater faith in the traditional methods of violence, and a stock argument advanced for it is that history does not support the use of non-violence. This is not fully correct, for there are many examples in history of the method of non-violent resistance having been used by all types of men and for all sorts of conflict.[41] And even if the above impression be correct, all that can be said against non-violence is that it has never been tried before. But then simply because a thing did not happen before, it does not follow that it can never happen at all. Our age with undreamt of innovations in every sphere is a testimony against it. However, it must be acknowledged that the science of non-violence is yet to be developed. It could not be properly developed so far because of the tendency

of saints and other non-violent men to keep aloof from the mundane world. But there is neither any inherent defect in non-violence, nor any lack of weapons in its armoury. The failure is of the men who apply it. Non-violence needs intensive constructive work, discipline and planning more than they are needed in violence. Of course, Vinobaji would not claim that non-violence would prove effective in all cases, but he would adopt only non-violence with a faith in its efficacy.[42] Moreover, when violence entails disaster as is clear today, it is better to resort to non-violence because of its intrinsic superiority in other respects.

It must, however, be acknowledged that the border line between violence and non-violence or between non-violence and cowardice is sometimes not easily distinguishable. But such cases are rare, and if an earnest effort is made, mistakes do not matter much.

Brahmacharya

The third vow of *brahmacharya* is popularly taken to stand simply for continence, but etymologically it signifies a positive conduct aiming at the Absolute, and it is this primary meaning which is generally lost sight of making its observance difficult.

Brahmacharya is an indispensable condition for the observance of the first two vows. Truth demands single-mindedness and full concentration of energy, while non-violence implies universal love. An individual who dissipates his vital energy or who has narrowed himself to his family, can neither realise Truth nor Non-violence. Investigations have shown that the cultural condition of a society rises in exact proportion to the pre-nuptial and post-nuptial restraints, it observes in the matter of sex. And what is true of a society is true of an individual. The linking up of chastity with a high moral and spiritual ideal is psychologically beneficial.

It is certainly difficult to observe this vow. But it becomes easier if certain physical rules of life are observed and attempt is made to control all the senses simultaneously. Vinobaji says, "The reading of sacred books

and the company of saintly men is certainly a great help towards a life of *brahmacharya*; but to live a natural life in the open air, and to work bare-bodied in the sunlight is an even greater help."[43] However, the vow of complete continence is only meant for a moral and spiritual genius. An ordinary mortal can only try to observe it as best as possible by keeping himself within limits. Hence of special importance is the social implication of this vow. It is that a woman should be able to live fearlessly in society and should not need protection of any man. She should be looked upon by a man either as a mother or as a sister or as a daughter. Similarly, every woman should regard a man to be either her father or brother or son.[44]

The ideal of *brahmacharya* should permeate the whole life of an individual. During the student days, it is to centre round devotion to the teacher. At the householder stage, it signifies mutual devotion and loyalty between husband and wife. After the age of fifty, it should centre round devotion to society; and after seventy-five, round devotion to God.[45]

The Sarvodaya thinkers reject the old concept of *brahmacharya* which regarded woman to be an object of fear. It then signified not a woman-free but an anti-woman life.[46] The consequence was that a *brahmachari* failed to develop the virtues of affection, patience, tolerance etc., which are observed in family men. Without these, *brahmacharya* loses its value.[47]

They are opposed like Gandhiji to the use of contraceptives. Vinobaji is not so much afraid of the increase in population as of the physical and moral degeneraton their use would bring about. He says, "It is not the weight of numbers but the weight of sin which proves to be the real burden on earth."[48] He believes that it should be possible to maintain all if their hands are utilized well.[49] He, no doubt, wishes the people to exercise self-control, and hopes that with the progress of science as the attitude of men gets more scientific, they would come to acquire better control over themselves.[50]

Sarvodaya thinkers do not agree to the view, quite prevalent in the west, that restriction of the libido must prove injurious both physically and psychologically. What they advocate is not the suppression of sex desire in the usually understood sense, but the direction of sex energy towards higher and nobler purposes. At the same time they would begin the process with the control of the mental urges,[51] for that would make the physical control of sex desire both easier and harmless. This also explains their attitude towards marriage, which is not looked upon as a fall. They only plead that it should not be taken as a license for sex indulgence, and cohabitation should only be for the purpose of procreation.[52] Marriage can surely help a normal man to sublimate his sex instinct provided he strives after it.

Tastelessness

Among the physical rules necessary for the observance of *brahmacharya*, one is that of tastelessness or the control of the palate. This vow implies a scientific attitude in the matter of diet, that is, one should take the right kind of food in the right quantity, the latter even being more important than the former.[53] It, however, should not be taken to mean that the taste of the food should be purposely spoiled.[54]

The social implication of the vow, according to Dada Dharmadhikari, is that one should eat only after feeding others and the production should be not for self—but for society.[55]

Non-Stealing and Non-Possession

These two vows go together and give expression to non-violence in the economic field. Non-stealing determines the method of earning livelihood, while non-possession sets limits to possessions.

The vow of non-stealing goes beyond what is ordinarily called theft. Vinobaji defines 'theft' as taking more from society in return for less.[56] He would place present-day administrators, teachers, businessmen and many others in the category of thieves. As a matter of fact, all of us, in one way or another, to a greater or less extent, consciously

or unconsciously, fall under that category. Hence there is always need for vigilance and continuous self-analysis. To escape the violation of this vow, one should only fulfil one's primary needs, limit the secondary ones and give up the false ones.[57]

Possession indicates accumulation to meet future needs and the right of ownership. Hence non-possession means absence of accumulation by an individual and surrender of ownership to society. This vow does not imply any lack of possession, as poverty does, but an affluent society, wherein possession vests in society and there is proper distribution. Such non-possession is not simply meant for the recluse but for all. However, it does imply a simple life.[58] A faith in God as the maintainer of all and a life of *brahmacharya* would help in its observance. The former would impart requisite courage and the latter would eliminate temptations. Vinobaji places greater emphasis on the application of 'non-possession' to public institutions than Gandhiji did. He does not like them to deposit their money in the banks to be utilised by them (banks) for any purpose whatsoever. He would prefer their use for some other noble object. He also disfavours collection of a permanent fund for any cause, no matter how desirable. Funds may, of course, be collected to meet the expenditure of any activity for a year or two.[59]

This vow is necessary for the stability and peace of society. Mankind cannot survive in the present age unless men love each other and share their affluence with others who are poorer. But it can only happen if the sense of private ownership disappears. Prophets and seers have been preaching non-possession from ancient times, but it is only now that the old argument of spirituality has been reinforced by material need.[60] Hence the trend towards Communism and Welfare State.

Trusteeship

The principle of non-possession has led Gandhiji to advocate his principle of trusteeship, which had both a general and an economic application. In its former aspect it meant that every thing a man had, including his

physical body and talents, was a trust and it should be fully devoted to the service of society. In the latter aspect, it pleaded that we should regard ourselves as the trustees of our wealth and behave accordingly. Dada Dharmadhikari has respectively called these aspects as 'Permanent or Absolute Trusteeship' and 'Transitional Trusteeship'. The latter has been so named because all the present thinkers hold that Gandhiji's principle of economic trusteeship was simply a technique of advancing towards economic non-possession, i. e., the abolition of ownership.[61] But this interpretation is rejected by some and they include even Maganbhai Desai who had succeeded K. G. Mashruwala as the editor of Gandhiji's Harijan Weeklies. They consider it to be a deviation from the position of Gandhiji, who according to them, never aimed at the abolition of ownership and who only wanted the rich to treat their wealth as a trust.[62] But it is difficult to accept this contention when such closer associates of Gandhiji as Vinobaji, K. G. Mashruwala, Acharya Kripalani, Kaka Kalelkar and Pyarelalji, the ex-secretary of Gandhiji, think otherwise. Of these Sri Mashruwala had expressed his opinion as early as 1936, and that too in a series of articles corrected and edited by Gandhiji himself. Therein he had written, "He (Gandhiji) would like to dispossess every person of all kinds of belongings. If he tolerates the institution of private property, it is not because he loves it or holds it to be necessary for the progress of humanity, but because he has yet to discover a truthful and non-violent method of abolishing that institution."[63] According to Pyarelalji, who had talks with Gandhiji on trusteeship in the Aga Khan Palace, the theory of trusteeship is a means of removing or transforming inequalities in nature, not for creating fresh inequalities so that some might play at "trusteeship". That would be travesty of its real purpose and meaning.[64] He also gives us a draft of trusteeship prepared and finalised with Gandhiji's modifications. Its second paragraph reads: "It does not recognize any right of private ownership of property except so far as it may be permitted by society for its own welfare."[65]

There is also a clear statement of Gandhiji in support of the above view. Once questioned as to why first earn crores and then use them for society, he replied, "But I accept the proposition that it is better not to desire wealth than to acquire it and become a trustee. I gave my own long ago, which should be proof enough of what I would like others to do. But what am I to advise those who are already wealthy and who would not shed the desire for wealth ? I can only say to them that they should use their wealth for service." And he further explained, "That being so I exercise my common sense and advise what is practical."[66] All this is in complete consonance with his fundamental idea that possession is inconsistant with non-violence.[67] Thus the charge of deviation is untenable. The interpretation of the Sarvodaya thinkers is also beneficial for as Vinobaji said, "If *ahimsa* is so defined as to imply working in a way as not to lead to much sudden change in the social structure, such definition would prove dangerous to *ahimsa* itself and favourable to violence."[68]

Gandhiji's theory of trusteeship was much scoffed at during his life-time, especially by those who had faith in Marxism. Yet it has a permanent truth, and its validity is being more and more realized in the West today. A. E. Morgan, a former chairman of the T. V. A. writes, "Modern life, with its rapidly growing complexities, greatly increases the number of situations in which the only sound relation is that of trustee, and the growth of a sense of responsibility has not been sufficiently rapid to meet these changing conditions".[69] In the field of industrial ownership and management too some thinkers and practical men of affairs in the democratic West are coming to the conclusion that a superior alternative both to capitalist and state ownership and management is a new form of ownership and management based on what might be termed the 'principle of trusteeship'.[70] And may I ask if the bureaucrats in a Welfare State or those who are in power or Party in the Communist States are not expected to regard themselves and behave as trustees ?

Bread-Labour

This vow is intimately related to the vows of non-violence, *brahmacharya* and non-possession. It is important for non-violence because much of the exploitation and conflict in society is due to a few being able to avoid physical labour and throw their burden on others. If non-violence is to be established in society, all except invalids must do some physical labour.[71] And then it also provides the necessary discipline for non-violence. R. B. Gregg observes, "Though to many it may at first seem incredible, careful and objective analysis shows that the same valuable benefits derived from military discipline—that is, habits of obedience, self-respect and self-reliance, self-control and self-sacrifice, tenacity of will, sense of unity with others, endurance of common hardships, sense of order and cooperation, energy, courage, equanimity and poise, practice in handling moral equivalents of weapons—are developed by widespread, habitual, understood hard work."[72] It is related to *brahmacharya* because it keeps the mind healthy. Vinobaji says, "I personally feel that bread-labour is more conducive to spirituality than meditation or yogic exercises."[73] The defect with the prevailing physical exercises is that besides being non-productive, they produce mental excitement not conducive to the purification of mind and heart.[74] Lastly, bread-labour would lead to a simplicity of life and thus help in the vow of non-possession.

Of the various forms of bread-labour, cultivation is the best from all points of view. But since it is not possible for all, spinning and weaving is recommended as the second choice.[75]

The social implication of this vow is that work is a duty and the produce belongs to society. The present tendency is to look down upon physical labour. It is only performed out of compulsion. This vow imparts dignity to such labour.[76]

Philosophy of Work

Intimately connected with the above vow, is the Sarvodaya philosophy of work, which considers work to be

essential both for the physical and intellectual development of an individual. Work taken as a whole caters to the growth of reasoning, imagination, venturesomeness and accurate functioning of the nervous system.[77] As J. C. Kumarappa puts it, "What food is to the body, that work is to the faculties of man."[78] It is "the essential medium through which man fulfils himself, develops and integrates his personality, and replenishes and enriches the social pool from which he draws his material and cultural sustenance".[79]

But every work has two components—the creative element which makes for the development and happiness of the individual, and the toil part of it. Both are necessary for development. Who does not know that drudgery for years in a laboratory is essential to become a scientist? But today we break up these two components, and while a few appropriate to themselves the play part of it, most people are compelled to perform hard routine all the time.[80] The result is that both suffer and ultimately society is the loser.

The tendency to avoid physical labour comes down from very early times. It is justified on the plea that without 'leisure', civilizations and arts would not flourish. But this argument is a mixture of truth, half-truth and untruth. Its view of relationship between culture and leisure is erroneous. It is not the people who enjoy leisure that produce the so-called objects of culture, but those who have to work at it out of compulsion to maintain themselves, and these have to twist and distort their art and to crush their individuality to satisfy the whims of their patrons. Such a state of affairs only lowers the quality of art and culture. Real art can only be spontaneous, and if leisure is needed, it is not for the patrons but for the artist. With all the socalled 'leisure' that men enjoy today, it is doubtful if their productions of art and culture can compare favourably with the productions of past ages. The reason probably is that what is even more needed is proper rest and peace of mind, and the modern world, inspite of its shortening of working hours, lacks

them. It is a queer 'leisure' to work for hours and hours, then to spend a few hours in enjoyment and to need sleeping pills to lie in bed at night half-drowsy. The real leisure lies in doing one's work peacefully, and it cannot be extracted out of time saved by working at high speed.[81] In reality we do not have even that much of leisure which our forefathers enjoyed. We do not have the peace and security they had.[82]

Leisure and the saving of time have no independent value. Their value depends on how they are used. Experience about it has not been a happy one so far. An important problem to-day in the west, especially in the U. S. A., is how to teach men the art of making proper use of their spare time. But this is only possible if the process of dehumanization of man going on there can be stopped, and it is closely associated with industrialism. To use leisure properly, one needs a high degree of self-discipline, which is one of the products of true work.[83] Hence what man needs today is to be reminded that some proper kind of work is necessary for his all-round health, and not that leisure is more desirable.

Physical labour is unavoidable both for the maintenance of society and for the health and development of an individual. Unfortunately, there is a gulf at present between the work needed to maintain the individual on the one hand, and that needed for social service and recreation on the other. This gulf has to be bridged, and the degree of man's culture and civilization is to be measured by the extent of harmonization he is able to bring about between these three.[84] This is not an impossible task. The gulf between the work necessary for individual living and that of social service can be well bridged if the social structure is such as to look after the needs of a man who devotes himself to that service. That is what Sarvodaya aims at by laying emphasis on non-possession, which implies social security. It is also not impossible to establish harmony between social service and the means of recreation. If considerations of utility and enterprise can make physical exercises and drill pleasant, if team spirit can make a game

pleasant, it is not incorrect to hold that a desire to serve society can also make physical labour pleasant. Thus there is no inherent antagonism between socially useful labour, the means of recreation and the cultural development of man.[85] Physical work is felt unpleasant and dull because of the lack of interest. Once the necessary interest has been aroused, the drudgery disappears and the work becomes pleasant. If all men share in this so-called 'drudgery', exploitation would surely decrease and then there would be real cultural progress.[86]

Fearlessness

Fearlessness is the 'Commander of all virtues'.[87] Without it, there can neither be pursuit of truth, nor observance of non-violence. A man relying on violence may be brave, but he cannot be fearless.[88] To be fearless, one should neither fear nor frighten anybody.[89]

The source of fear is in the mind. The root cause of it is the feeling of duality. Fearlessness would result from the realization that the soul is immortal and the body is only its outer garb. There is no distinction between ourselves and others, and hence there is no valid cause for fear. Thus fearlessness can be induced in an individual by making him realize all this. But it is, after all, a difficult mode of achieving it. There are some other ways also of removing fear. Fear born of ignorance can be done away with by the acquisition of proper knowledge.[90] If certain particular situations produce fear, one can get rid of it by growing accustomed to them. Lastly, the cultivation of a sense of duty and a feeling of self-respect can also help in the conquest of fear.[91]

Swadeshi

It is another name for neighbourliness. It denotes service of one's neighbours with the clear idea that they are a part of humanity to which the ultimate allegiance is due. This vow requires us to serve our neighbours not out of any narrow attachment to them, but because our capacities are limited, and the lure of service beyond our neighbourhood is only likely to deprive us of the opportunities of even those small services we can usefully render.[92]

It stands in the economic field for decentralised production so that the various regions would be self-dependent in their primary needs, while there might be mutual interdependence among them to fulfil their secondary needs. As such it signifies more than mere production for use. It implies that production should not be merely mechanical production for use, but with a view to suit individuals.[93] This would develop greater intelligence in the craftsman and provide better satisfaction to the consumers. It goes without saying that this vow demands of us use of articles produced by our neighbours in preference to those produced far away.

Toleration

The tenth vow of toleration or the feelings of equality for all religions is an outcome of two factors. One is the belief that the attributes of God are infinite and as such he can be worshipped in infinite ways and there is no justification for hatred and antagonism between the followers of different faiths. Secondly, the ethical doctrines of all religions are fundamentally the same. They all preach goodness and oppose wrong.[94]

The toleration advocated above is different from the toleration found in modern secular societies or states, which is born of indifference towards all religions. The toleration of Sarvodaya is born of faith in one's religion and respect for the religions of others.[95] There is no place for conversions in it.[96] But it does not mean any false praise or putting up with such evils as are serious. They have to be combated non-violently.[97]

The conception of equality of all religions is supported both by S. Radhakrishnan and Arnold Toynbee. The former says, " When we go behind the dogmas and creeds and get down to the depth, we discover that all religions draw their strength from the same unfathomable source."[98] Prof. Toynbee observes that he would "express his personal belief that the four higher religions that were alive in this age in which he was living were four variations on the single theme, and that, if all the four components of this heavenly music of the spheres could be audible on the

earth simultaneously, and with equal clarity, to one pair of human ears, the happy hearer would find himself listening, not to a discord but to a harmony."[99]

Removal of Untouchability

This vow stands fundamentally for perfect social equality, that is, for the abolition of all caste, religious and racial distinctions. It is with a view to it that Dada Dharmadhikari and K. G. Mashruwala even advocate prohibition of caste marriages,[100] while all of them welcome inter-national, inter-provincial and inter-caste marriages. Vinoba wants men of higher castes to adopt professions exclusively or largely confined so far to the socalled 'low caste' men. He would like scavengers to give up their work, which, he thinks, should be performed by the members of the family themselves.[101]

Gandhiji tried to get Hindu temples thrown open to the Harijans, Vinobaji has gone a step further and he is getting them opened to the members of other faiths as well. Thus the Sarvodaya thinkers would even abolish all kinds of untouchabilities.

Aninda

This twelfth vow of *aninda* (not to speak ill of others) is an addition of Vinobaji. It is included in non-violence, but the conditions in the country today justify its separate mention. There is a good deal of ill-speaking in political and other fields, and this habit is found even among Sarvodaya workers, who are expected to behave better. This vow implies acceptance of everything good we hear of others and rejection of anything ill unless the proofs thereof leave no other alternative. Suspicion should find no place at all in our minds.[102]

Humility

Though not a vow in itself, because by its very nature it cannot be one, it is nevertheless as important as they. It is the gateway of all virtues,[103] and there can be no search for Truth and no purification of mind and heart without it.[104] But it should not be confused with courtesy, which is only an outward mode of behaviour.[105]

Appraisal

These are in short the various ethical disciplines which, following Gandhiji, the present Sarvodaya thinkers enjoin on us. They reiterate the ideas of Gandhiji in their own words. But still their own distinct contribution lies in emphasizing the positive aspects of non-violence, clarifying that the Gandhian theory of trusteeship stands for the abolition of private property, elucidating the Sarvodaya philosophy of work, laying greater stress on the application of the principle of non-possession to public institutions and in laying emphasis on the social aspects of the vows. They provide a consistent basis both for individual and social life. The Sarvodaya philosophy does not stand for any dual morality. It creates no split personality, no schism in the soul of men. It believes that as the means are, so is the end. It is unscientific to hold that one can reap something different from what is sown. Therefore there is even no 'worldly-wise' justification for applying any such set of norms to social life as is different from that applied to individual life.

The 'vows' expounded above embody the principles of a happy life. It has been true of all ages, and is truer of the present age. 'Search for truth' denotes the spirit of this age. Only it has to be further realized that this search should not be confined to the realm of science alone. There is a truth of social life as well—the unity of all life—without the realization of which the discoveries of the laws of science would be like rudderless boats which might even carry the world to utter destruction. It is through mistakes that the laws of science have been discovered, and it is by acting on our relative truths that we can approach the Absolute Truth. What is required is sincere effort.

Non-violence is the crying need of the day, and mankind has to choose either progressive march towards complete non-violence or towards complete violence, which is another name for annihilation. It may not be possible now to have a compromise between the two. And if violence has to be eliminated, it is essential to accept the principles of non-stealing, non-possession, bread-

labour, swadeshi, toleration and the removal of untouchability. The first three would eliminate all economic exploitation, provide economic and psychological security, do away with all economic class distinctions and reorientate our attitude towards physical work. Swadeshi, 'the great vow of the age' and 'the birth-duty of man', is the sovereign duty of all conducive to the welfare of the world.[106] It checks man form frittering away his energies in running after a 'will-o' the wisp', and helps in the realization of the unity of all life. Toleration, which is a plea for the coexistence of all ideologies and the removal of all distinctions between man and man, would diminish chances of world conflict and individual violence. Thus these disciplines denote the basic needs of the age. Brahmacharya can conserve human energy for higher purposes and may even help us solve the population problem of the world without leading to any moral, physical and intellectual degeneration. The vow of tastelessness is in a way a part of it. Fearlessness is indispensable for non-violence is the path of the brave. Men need extraordinary fearlessness to break new grounds and to organise life on a new set of principles. Distrust and suspicion are our greatest enemies, and they are products of fear. Today there is fear for life, fear of being reduced to penury, fear of walking alone and fear of the loss of social prestige, and what not. They all stand in the path of truth and non-violence, and terrify their votaries. These fears have to be given up.

Observance of all these vows is certainly difficult. Had it not been so, they would not have deserved being termed 'vows' at all. But the path to heaven has never been strewn with roses and the uphill struggle of man must continue on the very basis of failures. ●

CHAPTER V

IDEAS ON HISTORY AND REVOLUTION

Growth of Non-violence in History

Gandhiji saw in history a ceaseless growth, an unfoldment in terms of spirituality, and he put a non-violent interpretation on history. Vinobaji does the same and develops the idea further. He thinks that man has been developing *ahimsa* from the very beginning and this evolution is still going on. Society has made sufficient progress during the last five thousand years. Men have come closer to each other, there is a greater affection between them and the effort of mankind is directed towards the extension of the sphere of love. He finds its confirmation in the cultural and social history of India. The institution of a separate warrior caste, the renunciation of violence by the Brahmans personally as illustrated in the demand of Vishwamitra for Ram and Lakshman to protect him from the wicked, the abjurement of violence altogether by the saints, and lastly, Gandhiji's experiments in collective non-violence, are regarded as the various stages in the growth of the spirit of non-violence in India. The rise of vegetarianism was also a step in that very direction. The story of Mahabharat shows that by now the Indian attitude towards women has considerably changed, and though a noble soul like Bhisma found it difficult to decide what his duty was, we in this age would not be dismayed about it if placed in similar situation. All this shows that we have now a clearer conception of ethical principles and our ethical conscience has grown with time.[1] The same sort of evolution is also discernible in the West. The increasing kindness to children, the more human approach towards animals and criminals, the greater recognition of the equality of woman, the conception of the welfare state, the emphasis on liberty and equality, all these are indicative of the same progress. The increased moral consciousness

of the world was exhibited during the Suez Crisis of 1956, when even people in Great Britain protested against the action of their own government in resorting to the method of war. However, humanity's march towards non-violence has not been in a straight line. The path has been zig-zag and there have been both advance and regress.[2]

Such an interpretation of history seems to be open to three objections. First, it may be questioned if there is at all any logic in history, any law of historical development. Secondly, is not the world still the same as it was in ancient days with the only difference that our means of oppression and destruction (as well as construction) are considerably improved and are adorned with hypocrisy? Thirdly, are such views consistent with those of the great and renowned modern scholars of cultures and civilizations such as Oswald Spengler, Arnold Toynbee, Pitrim Sorokin and others who have rejected all linear interpretations of history? Of these the first question is fundamental, and there is much in several eminent scholars to support this doubt. To cite only one instance, Prof. H. A. L. Fisher writes, "Men wiser and more learned than I have discerned in history a plot, a rhythm, a predetermined pattern. These harmonies are concealed from me. I can see only one emergency following upon another as wave follows upon wave, only one great fact with respect to which, since it is unique, there can be no generalizations only one safe rule for the historian: that he should recognize in the development of human destinies the play of the contingent and the unforeseen."[3] But several others, both in the past and the present, have tried to make sense out of history, and these attempts have generally been made in times of crisis when the perturbed minds of men have sought to draw lessons out of history and to seek inspiration from it. There is no reason why they should not have done so. In the words of Toynbee himself, "We cannot afford such defeatism, it is unworthy of the greatness of man's minds, and it is refuted by human minds past achievements.... This job of making sense of history is one of the crying needs of our day."[4]

What is only difficult to claim is that only one's interpretation is possible.

To the second question, it may be replied that the very fact that our means of oppression and destruction (as well as reconstruction) have been considerably improved is a proof of our intellectural advancement, while 'hypocrisy' is a positive testimony of greater moral consciousness. It is a stage in the direction of greater humanization. To the third question the answer is that such views are not inconsistant with those of the above philosophers of history. As a modern writer points out, their rejection of the one line concept does not necessarily imply a denial of progress. Each civilization shows one or more ascending lines of progress, and even when it disappears, it leaves behind a valuable legacy.[5] Thus it would not be wrong to say that mankind has been continually moving forward ever since it came into existence. It has been taking up and developing one quality after another in accordance with the call of the age.[6]

As regards the rise and decay of societies, Sarvodaya thinkers have come to the conclusion that a society progresses as long as its members show enterprise, inspiration, enthusiasm, restraint in matters of sex and money and capacity for hard work, and observe laws of diet and hygiene. Decay sets in with a life of pleasure and indulgence, and a contempt for physical labour.[7] All this is too obvious to need any proof.

Sarvodaya and Dialectical Materialism

Sarvodaya thinkers, while accepting the great services Marx rendered to mankind,[8] specially to the poor and the afflicted, find only partial truth in Dialectical Materialism. They agree with Marx that life is a connected and integrated whole and no phenomenon of life can be understood in isolation. They also accept that life is ever in a state of flux and that qualitative changes occur not gradually but rapidly and abruptly in the form of leaps.[9] They, however, disagree with Marx that all progress takes place dialectically, i. e. by a conflict between opposite tendencies, and even when they accept the validity of this principle,

their viewpoint is different. Sri K. G. Mashruwala writes, "There is sufficient ground to believe that the socalled contradictions and struggles are like the movements of the shuttle which unfolds the weft-thread during its toss from both the sides to weave the cloth. But for an inherent harmony between the whole activity, no synthesis of thesis and antithesis would be possible."[10] This is a typically Indian attitude, which believes in the essential harmony of all things. While the West thinks in terms of the conquest of nature, the Indian philosophers sought to realize their oneness with nature.

The Sarvodaya philosophy is 'idealistic' in that it recognizes the existence of God and asserts the primacy of the spiritual over the material. It, no doubt, attempts at a synthesis between idealism and materialism, but it has a leaning towards idealism. It objects to the materialism of Karl Marx on both theoretical and practical grounds. The theoretical mistake of Marxism is to assume that consciousness, whatever its origin, can be understood in the same manner as matter. It fails to realize that while the study of matter is an objective exploration, consciousness can only be subjectively experienced. The result is that having reduced consciousness to a behauiour of matter, Marxism knocks the bottom out of ethics. It fails to answer the question why a man should be good, that is, generous, kind and unselfish, when such goodness has become the supreme need of the day. The fact is that the root of morality lies in the endeavour of man to realize the unity of existence, and to one who has realised this unity, the observance of morality become easy and natural. No doubt, some materialist philosophers did make sacrifices but it was hardly consistent with their philosophy.[11]

The materialistic interpretation of history gives an undue importance to the economic factor, when it is only in modern times that economics has dominated political life and partly affected other departments of life. The march of history, its winding and zig-zag movement its progress and regress cannot be explained by a single cause or motive. Search for bread is surely one of the primal

urges of human beings and much that we find in human society can be explained best in terms of economics. But it cannot explain everything, and other factors too exercise a powerful influence on social changes. Simplification may be convenient but it can only be affected by doing violence to facts. If it can be proved that the progress of humanity is due to economic causes, it is equally possible to prove it on some other basis.[12] A great defect of such an interpretation is to make civilization a matter of outer environment, of advance in tools and implements used, rather than a matter of man's inner development.[13]

Revolution

To a Marxist, therefore, a revolution primarily signifies change in the economic structure of society, while the Sarvodaya thinkers attach primary importance to change in the values of life. According to them, all revolutions are spiritual at the source. They mean a more or less radical break with past ideas, ideals, modes of thought, feelings and actions.[14] A revolution is the movement of human spirit not in any narrow, partial or sectarian sense but in its wide comprehensive sweep affecting life's fundamental outlook and relations. In the wake of the change in the values of life follow changes in the political, economic and social structure of society.[15] As such a revolution signifies revolution in the values of life.

Such a conception of revolution runs counter to the 19th century conception, when the term, if used alone, referred to a violent political revolution. This was so because in those days of political autocracy, the ideas of revolution and violence came to be closely associated and identified with each other. Karl Marx, no doubt, attached ultimate importance to social revolution, but to him as well the road to that revolution lay through the seizure of political power, that is, a political revolution was to precede social revolution. Even Lenin wrote, " The question of power is the fundamental question of every revolution. "[16] However, the Sarvodaya conception of revolution is nearer to the present-day conception of revolution in social science. To a modern student of that

science, the identification of revolution with political upheaval and consequent emphasis on violence seems misplaced. A recasting of social order is a far more important characteristic of revolution than a change of political constitutions or the use of violence in the attainment of that end.[17] No doubt, in recent years communist thinkers have begun to talk less of the desirability of violence and have reduced emphasis on its inevitability, yet the old habit still persists.[18] Herein lies one of the greatest differences between Sarvodaya and Communism. This difference is a natural consequence of their differing philosophies of life.

In concrete terms, Sarvodaya aims at a revolution which would establish such new values in individual and social life as are implied in the various ethical vows dealt with in the preceding chapter. To cite from 'Planning for Sarvodaya', "Sarvodaya visualizes a revolution in the outlook and ways of living that prevail in our society. It visualizes the creation of a new society, the establishment of a non-violent social order."[19] This society, dealt with in the next two chapters, while similar in many respects to the communist society, would also radically differ from it in that man would be the centre of such a society. It would reflect a synthesis between socialism and capitalism and at the same time would have some special features of its own.

The Sarvodaya revolution aims to develop humanity in man through his own efforts and by means consistent with the spirit of humanity.[20] It atttempts to resolve the various contradictions of individual and social life, which express themselves in individual life in terms of 'split' personality and in social life in the shape of class and other distinctions, and various other social problems. They relate to the fact that while mechanization is itself a product of developed intelligence, it has the general effect of dwarfing that intelligence; while science has multiplied the availability of goods, it has reduced man to the position of a mere consumer and deprived him of control over his own life; and lastly, while people have been brought

nearer by scientific advances, their desire for closer contact has diminished and relations have become more impersonal.[21]

Process of Revolution

Since 'the essence of a revolution lies in the revolution of values' and 'society changes with change in men', the first step in the Sarvodaya technique of revolution is to convert the people to the new point of view. This needs a dual process.One is of the appeal to the intellect and reason, and the other is of the appeal to the heart of an individual. There are some men of strong wills who are capable of transforming their lives once they are intellectually convinced of the correctness of the new values, but their number is never large. A majority of men have weak wills, and are unable to change their life habits even if they are convinced of the new values. The feelings and emotions of such men have to be aroused to make them adopt the new values. In other words, it needs some effort and sacrifice on the part of those who want to enshrine new values in society, and they themselves can only be effective if they have already adopted those values in their lives. A barren preaching, divorced from action, is more in the nature of intellectual indulgence and cannot be effective.[22]

There is also always a third group of die-hards in every society, who are not at all converted. They are to be left to change under the pressure of circumstances. It may be expected that as the new consciousness would develop, they would be compelled by moral pressure or social disapprobation to fall in with others. There is nothing wrong about such transformations though they must be regarded as inferior to transformations brought about purely through persuasion, for moral pressure only arouses humanity and goodwill in the other party. It neither injures his self-respect nor impedes the development of his personality.[23]

The conversion of the people can proceed only slowly for it is only by and by that the people can adjust their life

in the light of the new values, and for this they have to be provided with opportunity.[24] Hence, while there should be a sense of urgency about a revolution, patience is equally necessary. The technique of this process is evident in Bhoodan-Gramdan (Land and Village gift) movement of Vinobaji. There is a mass campaign of 'conversions' to persuade men to give up wrong and harmful ideas, ways and values, and to accept the correct ones. These new ideas and values are so chosen that they have a direct bearing on some major social problems, and their acceptance and practice are expected to lead to the solution of that problem and incidentally to a radical change in society. The change takes place as a result of the individuals beginning here and now to live the values of the future society. Another important feature of the method is that though the new ideas appear difficult to practise, a phased programme is so contrived that even ordinary men are able to advance by easy steps towards a seemingly difficult goal. That is why Vinoba's demand for land, very modest in the beginning, became one-sixth after some progress of the movement and later on it increased to the whole of the village land. However, since even this would be difficult for an individual if he were asked to do it alone, for it is hard to live a moral life in the midst of immorality, the programme though directed to an individual, has a mass character, i. e., whole groups and masses of men are sought to be touched and moved by it. At the same time it is devised that moved by the new ideas and values, people may cooperate to create new institutions and forms of social life.[25]

Looked at from another angle, the process of social change, as explained by Vinobaji, is that the fundamental idea of a revolution occurs first of all to a contemplative seer. If the new thought does not meet a favourable situation, it remains confined within a narrow circle. It only spreads among the masses, if the time is propitious. In the beginning only a few individuals translate it in their lives, then a group of men do so, and later on society accepts it. Appropriate legislation, if at all, only comes at the end as a manifestation of established social opin-

ion.[26]* Vinobaji does not believe in the ability of the state authority to transform society. According to him, it can surely bring about some changes in society and render some service, but they would not be so basic and fundamental as to constitute a revolution. On this issue, however, Acharya Kripalani has not been able to agree with him. He assigns a basic role to the state in bringing out social changes. He says, "Revolutionary changes, whatever their form and content, to be put through need power. Therefore the first test of a successful revolution is the transfer of power."[28] According to him, a comprehensive revolution seeks to control political power from the very beginning.[29] +

However, the Sarvodaya technique of social change accords primary inportance to the power of ideas, and in this respect it has the support of many thinkers in the West including Bertrand Russell, who says, "The power of thought, in the long run, is greater than any other human power."[30] At the same time Lewis Mumford's four stages of Formulation, Incarnation, Incorporation and Embodiment showing as to how an idea capable of transforming the person and the community actually comes into existence and operates, depict a process which is very similar to that of Vinobaji.[31] However, the Sarvodaya process of revolution does not minimise the importance and the need of creating a congenial atmosphere for the acceptance of the new values by society. It is admitted that even the most independent-minded men are not completely immune from the influence of their environment, while the common man is more or less at its mercy.[32] Hence the process of revolution must be doublesided. Simultaneous attempts should be made to transform the individual on the one hand and to change the social structure on the other. Thus Sarvodaya steers a

* Prof Ernest Barlser writes, "We may say that law emerges from social thought about justice, and not from a vacuum, and that when it emerges it does so as a manifestation, and not as a creation." (Principles of Social and Political Theory, p. 173)

+The whole matter has been considered in detail in chapter VIII under the head "Constructive work and Politics."

middle course between the view that an individual is driven under the force of his moral nature and that the social structure changes its forms along with the development of human character, and the Marxist view that it is the environment which primarily needs change.[33] Still, a greater stress is laid on the conversion of an individual in Sarvodaya, and this for two reasons. First, it is individuals who start the process of revolution and try to change the social environment. To do so effectively, these individuals themselves first of all need conversion.[34] Secondly, while it is true that a proper social structure considerably assists moral development, it is truer to say that a good social structure can be achieved only when there is an adequate moral development.[35] Hence the transformation of an individual gets somewhat of a priority in the Sarvodaya technique of revolution.

As such the Sarvodaya thinkers assign a greater role to individuals in history than the communists. It is held that an individual, who identifies himself with society, can become an effective instrument for a revolution. Such an identification gives him the capacity to move society in any direction, he likes.[36] But this implies that he must be above all a sincere and true servant of the people and any programme to be revolutionary must also ameliorate the condition of the people. In other words, it should be both revolutionary and ameliorative at the same time, and it is possible since there is no necessary antagonism between the two. It all depends upon the perspective with which that programme is carried out. A proper revolutionary perspective can even convert ordinary services into appropriate means of revolution.[37] Various acts of service can make the common people receptive to the message of the new values inspiring that servant of humanity. That is why, according to Vinobaji, even a single pure man can bring about a revolution in the whole world.[38]

It may be argued here that ameliorative activities would only blunt the desire for revolution and side-track the main aim. No doubt, this fear has some validity, but it is

only so when amelioration becomes the primary aim and the development of the power of the people is relegated to a secondary place. On the other hand, if the people are educated and taught to work for the betterment of their condition through self-efforts, they are sure to become more revolutionary-minded. "It is not", as Acharya Kripalani says, "merely the amount of misery that brings about a revolution but people's ideas about it."[39]

The greater stress laid by Sarvodaya on the role of the individual is supported by the whole evidence of history. A great many changes are due to the influence of persons or groups. As R. B. Gregg says, "Before there could be socialism there had to be a Karl Marx; before there was Christianity there was Christ."[40] Modern philosophers of history like Arnold Toynbee and Albert Schweitzer also think likewise. According to Toynbee, all acts of social creation are the works either of individuals or, at most, of creative minorities; and Schweitzer opines that civilization can only revive when there shall come into being in a number of individuals a new tone of mind independent of the one prevalent among the crowd and in opposition to it, a tone of mind which will win over the collective one, and in the end determine its character.[41]

Appraisal

Such are the Sarvodaya ideas on history, revolution and its process. The present thinkers have elaborated Gandhiji's view of history by showing how the spirit of non-violence has been progressively unfolding itself in society. In the changed conditions of world today when communism faces western democracy and contests for the allegiance of the newly independent nations of Asia and Africa, these thinkers clearly explain their agreements and differences with communism. They elucidate their conception of revolution and the process by which society undergoes a revolutionary transformation. In all this the contribution of the present thinkers has been important, for they had only the basic ideas of Gandhiji to guide them in this field. Their lack of enthusiasm for legislation to build up the new society can be traced to Gandhiji,

who once said, "All legislation in advance of general opinion argues bankruptcy of missionary effort. My reliance, therefore, always has been on missionary enterprise."[42]

The Sarvodaya thinkers hope to attain through their method of social transformation a far more radical reconstruction of society than is aimed at even by the communists. This method is generally acknowledged to be theoretically correct, but doubts are cast on the practicability of the technique. This doubt is reinforced by the experience that despite Vinoba's intense penance of the last twelve years, the Bhoodan-Gramdan movement has only achieved some eight per cent of its target of fifty million acres of land and out of some four million acres obtained in gifts, only some twenty-five per cent of it or some sixty-two per cent of cultivable land has been distributed so far. The number of gramdans (village gifts) is about fifty-three hundred, while of the workers some eight thousand and of the peace soldiers thirty-three hundred.[43] Vinobaji had expected that his movement would be able to infuse a new revolutionary spirit in the masses and change the very life structure,[44] but all this has not happened. The targets remain unrealised and the hopes of a psychological and social revolution are still mere dreams. No doubt, Vinobaji wins personal triumph wherever he goes and whatever has been achieved is impressive and of great significance in itself in as much as the land distributed is more than what would be distributed under proposed ceiling legislation, but in relation to the ambitious aims and objects of the movement, it is insignificant. This failure needs an explanation.

The main cause of this failure lies in the lack of the proper type of dedicated workers in requisite number. In other words, the movement has failed to create enthusiasm in the public. Now this shortcoming is chiefly due to the fact that the values, Sarvodaya seeks to establish, run counter to the western way and trend of life, which has attraction not only for the common people but for most of the highly respected top leaders of present-day India.

They were the comrades of Gandhiji in his political movements, and they had come to acquire enormous prestige even though they had differed from him on the question of social and economic reconstruction. Compared to them, the present Sarvodaya thinkers and leaders with the solitary exception of Shri Jayaprakash Narayan, have been unknown figures, and therefore their task has been all the more difficult. The public is dismayed in face of the divided counsel of its leaders, and then it naturally prefers the way of the world. However, it may be that as time passes and old values prove unfit to meet the challenge of the age, new values may find better acceptance. But nothing definite can be predicted for it is not essential for any civilization to be wise and to adapt itself to the needs of the times.

Secondly, the workers have been more anxious to obtain as much land in donations as possible than to make people fully understand the whole idea lying at the base of the movement and donate land in the spirit desired of them. Had they approached the people correctly, they would have probably enacted a revolution in society though the land donations might not have been so large.

Thirdly, the movement neglected the cities, where the present leadership of society is practically concentrated, and to which even the villages look for guidance. There should also have been some programme to better the lot of the common people living in the cities. However, what was done in the cities before 1957 was only the dissemination of Sarvodaya ideas and the acquiring of a few *sampattidans* (gifts of wealth or income). But these alone could not enthuse the urban people. It was only in 1957 that Vinobaji advocated the recruitment of peace soldiers for the cities to carry the new message to the city people and to devote themselves to their service. But since by that time the main momentum of the movement had passed away, the call failed to evoke any appreciable response. Thus the neglect of the cities in the early years of the movement is one of the factors responsible for its unsatisfactory results.

Fourthly, as pointed out by a sympathetic foreigner[45] devoted to the cause of Sarvodaya, Vinobaji's flight to new realms and programmes before the workers had been able to fulfil the previous one, was another cause of failure. Vinobaji began with ordinary land-gifts, but after sometime enlarged his demand first to one-sixth of the land and later on to the whole villages. This was followed by emphasis on peace soldier movement and the Sarvodaya-patra programme, which implies a pledge to maintain peace and to devote regularly a handful of grain or one paisa per day for the maintenance of Sarvodaya workers. These rapid jumps, though necessary and natural, only bewildered the workers, whose number was not sufficiently large, made them inactive and at last created frustration in them. It also happened that to spur them to new and greater efforts, Vinobaji prescribed for them targets much beyond their capacity, and they agreed to it out of their reverence for him. But the ultimate result was that they even failed to achieve what was possible for them.

Lastly, there was the mistake of accepting the monetary aid of the Gandhi Memorial Fund for the movement. This, as pointed out by Sri Dhirendra Mazumdar himself, was a fundamental error.[46] The movement should have been carried on from the very beginning with the support of the people themselves. Though this must have reduced the number of workers, their quality would have been better in that they would have been better imbued with the spirit of Sarvodaya and the achievements of the movement would have been greater than what they are.

However, such mistakes were but natural, for the Sarvodaya method is a novel technique of which the world has had no previous experience, and it is only through trial and error that a sound general technique can be evolved, which in itself would always need some modification in the light of the uniqueness of each particular situation. The old method of violence is incongruous today and the experience of the Russian Revolution with its lack of freedom of thought even after a period of some forty-five

years, demonstrates the failure of a revolution imposed from above to establish new values in society. It would be a calamity to conclude so soon, as some have done, that a change of heart and thereby a non-violent revolution is impracticable.[47] It has been said that the most poignant tragedies of history are those in which men have cried 'impossible' too soon, and for want of vision have summed up energies sufficient to win the day too late.[48] In the present context of scientific development, which vetoes violence, discovery of a non-violent process of social change is an imperative necessity, and it would be found in some such process as advocated by Sarvodaya.

CHAPTER VI

SARVODAYA SOCIETY—ITS SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

The importance of a proper social, economic and political structure cannot be over-emphasized. These structures not only embody the social values established in society, but they also aid or hinder the establishment of those values. The Sarvodaya philosophy, no doubt, gives primacy to the individual. To Gandhiji, an individual was the measure of all things, and though Vinobaji speaks in terms of social organism, the individual with him is a reality. It is he who reflects God in himself, who is good by nature, who is to seek truth and to walk alone in the world if need arises, and with whom the task of any social transformation is to begin. But he is no isolated being. He influences society and is in turn influenced by it. If in spite of his innate goodness he goes astray, much fault lies with the wrong social structure. Hence the establishment of a proper type of society becomes essential, and to do so one must have some idea of it. However, any delineation of its shape is a difficult task, and if attempted in details, it is bound to prove utopian. Therefore only outlines can be drawn and trends indicated.[1] This is what the Sarvodaya thinkers have attempted to do, and they could not have avoided it faced as they are with the problem of the reconstruction of Indian society. The picture, as it emerges from their speeches and writings, is not very detailed and even for the details given no finality can be claimed.

A. The Social Structure

The fundamental postulates of Sarvodaya militate against the present society with its social and economic inequalities, its spirit of competition based on the belief of the antagonism of individual interests, its worship of money, and duality in the conduct of people at home and

outside. It aims to reconstruct society on the basis of truth, non-violence, physical labour, non-possession, tolerance and eqalility. In such a society there would be no distinctions of any kind, there would be an all-round developement of all, and all would be able to cooperate with each other because the absence of inequality and exploitation would allow the better side of human nature to assert itself.

Agro-Industrial Communities

Most of the inequality in society, social or economic, is born of the low esteem in which physical labour is held and of the high regard for mental work. The way to its removal lies in the intellectualization of the labourer and the labourization of the intellectual. Hence Sarvodaya thinkers advocate a society in which none would be exempt from physical labour except for physical reasons. Even ministers, doctors, professors and judges would have to perform some physical labour for a few hours per day. It may be that some may devote more time to intellectual work and some less, but that would be no ground for differences in payment.[2] The ideal would be that everybody participates in agricultural activity, for experience shows it to be the best work for normal persons. It helps most in the development of the individual; contact with nature and work in the field imparts zest to life and is conducive to self-restraint; and it engenders love, courage, a spirit of enterprise and faith in truth.[3]

Thus as against the present tendency towards urbanization, Sarvodaya stands for a rural civilization. It regards city life unhealthy because it lacks community of feelings and does not permit contact with nature. Cities are 'human jungles', dense but devoid of feelings. Moreover, a democracy of peasant proprietors is the most peace loving regime.[4] But agriculture cannot stand alone and it has to be combined with handicrafts and industries making the communities agro-industrial.[5]

It may be observed here that in laying emphasis on physical work for an intellectual worker and on 'agrarianism', the Sarvodaya thinkers are not alone. Both social

thinkers and physicians in the west are realizing the need of physical work for both physical and mental health of the people.[6] In communist China the leaders are of opinion that unless intellectuals participate in manual labour, they cannot get rid of their bourgeois outlook and attain an intellectual equation with the toiling masses.[7] As regards 'agrarianism', there is a school of thought even in the most industrialised United States of America which holds farming to be a basic occupation and agriculture to be the natural way of life.[8] A. E. Morgan finds fault with city life because it commonly fails to keep alive mutual confidence and goodwill, without which society cannot exist. There is a loss of emotional ties of affection and of a sense of social responsibility. He holds that urbanization is injurious both to the cities and the villages. It robs the latter of its most intelligent people, while the migration of the riff-raffs of villages and small towns to cities only increases crime and vice. He thinks that this dual harm has been one of the major causes, though an indirect one, of the decline of the nations, cultures and civilizations.[9] Another writer, Miriam Beard, says, "Men suffered on the land but survived, while in the cities they flourished—and faded."[10] Thus 'agrarianism' in the west also is both a moral philosophy and a theory of history.

Economic Equality and Private Property

The Sarvodaya plea for equality is not a demand for any unintelligent and indiscriminate equality. It only advocates that all should be treated morally equal and this equality should find expression in external life as well.[11] In terms of economics, it implies that one should have no more than one needs. However, the judge of one's needs is one himself and these needs would vary from individual to individual. But they should vary only within limited margins like the statures of men. Small differences, therefore, do not matter but great disparities have to be removed.[12] It is they which stir up jealousies and create social tensions. There can be no peace, security and co-operation unless there is approximate economic equality.

This problem of economic equality is intimately con-

nected with the question of private property. Ideally, Sarvodaya rules out possession of private property altogether for it is inconsistent with the principle of non-possession. However, it differentiates between private and personal property. It would permit possession of things for personal use, but not of such means of production as might be instrumental in the exploitation of others.[13]

All this may seem too radical and dangerous to those with whom the institution of private property is an article of faith. But in the circumstances of today, that institution does not appear to have any bright future. The concept of the welfare state is gaining more and more adherents in the most conservative of countries, and control on the possession and use of private property is increasing. A time may even come when only the possession of personal property would be permitted. However, Sarvodaya does not favour the method of forcible dispossession or nationalisation, since the one involves violence and the other an increase in the power of the state, which Sarvodaya would like to reduce to the minimum.[14]

Social Equality and the Caste System

The problem of social equality is bound up with the class and caste divisions in society. Caste is only an immobile class and class is only a mobile caste. But, it is the caste system which is a special feature of the Indian society and which is of immediate concern to Sarvodaya thinkers.

The caste system is a much criticized institution, but it has survived all onslaughts of social reformers and has even penetrated the non-Hindu religious communities of India. It is breaking up, no doubt, under the stress of modern life, but the process is very slow and at times the system seems to have acquired greater strength. Gandhiji had gradually veered round to the view that the caste system must go in its prevailing form, but its good features must be retained. Vinobaji is of like view. He thinks that the system as it exists today is only a perversion of the ancient *Varna Vyavastha*, which originated from good

motives. It did not originally imply any feeling of high or low, any difference in payment or prohibition of intercaste marriages.[15] The old system was based on certain useful and valid principles of social organization and they must be retained in any future reconstruction. He writes, "An ideal state will need some such social organization. The essence of the caste system is (1) commensurate wages, (2) absence of competition and (3) a system of education which will take advantage of inherrited dispositions."[16] Hence he favours the revival of this institution of hereditary occupational groups, but without any idea of superiority or inferiority attached to it and without allowing it to develop into a rigid steel-frame.[17]

He holds that every individual has the qualities of all the four *varnas*, though one of them dominates in him. This dominant quality should determine his profession, but other qualities also are not to be neglected. Thus all should work both with head and hands, and all should develop the equanimity of the Brahmans or the learned caste, the fearlessness of the Kshatriyas or the warrior caste, the compassion of the Vaishyas or the businessmen and the faith of the Shudras or the servant class.[18] However, some other Sarvodaya thinkers do not agree with Vinobaji in his plea for the revival of the system. Dada Dharmadhikari and Kaka Kalelkar stand for its total abolition. The latter is of view that a living society must have the capacity for making new experiments. The caste system is dying and the *varna* system has gone into oblivion. It is time to make new experiments.[19]

The defence of the *Varna Vyavastha* by Gandhiji and Vinobaji is natural. Some kind of caste system is inherent in a society based on agriculture and handicraft, and as advocates of such a society, they cannot but plead for the retention of its useful features. It has to be acknowledged that this system allows men of different aptitudes and abilities to develop their specialities, curbs competition, emphasizes cooperation and obedience, and accords permission to persons of different cultures, habits and customs to live as they like. Even Gerald Heard pleads

for a quadritype organization of society consisting of the seers, the politicians, the technicians and the domesticians.[20] Notwithstanding all this, the caste system is such a discredited institution that what is wanted is not its repair but the erection of a new system, even if it retains some of its good features. However, care will have to be taken that its place is not occupied by 'class'. It may result in even greater injustices. Both the class and the caste systems are enemies of social equality. While the one differentiates on the basis of birth, the other does so on the basis of wealth and education.

Ashram Vyavastha

Whatever the differences of opinion about the caste system, there is none on the revival of the *ashram* system. This system divides individual life into four stages, of which the first three are of twenty-five years each and the last one embraces the remaining period of life. The first is of *brahmacharya*, a period of celibacy when the whole energy is to be concentrated on study and training. The second is that of the householder (*grihastha*) when an individual is expected to fulfil his obligations to society by playing his proper economic and social role. The third is that of *vanaprastha*, a period of retreat when the individual is expected to rise above mundane interests and to live a life of self-restraint and purity near a town or village. This makes it possible for him to act as a teacher and adviser, and thus to give society the benefit of his accumulated experience. The last stage is that of *sanyas*, 'the period of renunciation and the expectant awaiting of freedom'.

These conventional four stages may be divided into two only. The first will include the first two stages, when activity predominates, whether in the shape of study or active service, and the second will embrace the last two stages, when no matter how active the life, the chief spring of action is the purification of mind and heart.[21] Of these four stages, the last one of *sanyas* has been misunderstood because many wicked and idle persons take to the garb of a *sanyasi*, and even in the case of others, it is taken to denote escapism. But a real *sanyas* is nothing of the

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kind. It is a period of longing for real happiness. It is an acme of life, a stage when a man becomes a law unto himself, and having attained such a stage, he can help in the establishment of a state-free society.[22] However, it is on the revival of the *vanaprastha* that Vinobaji lays chief stress. Society lacks proper type of public workers in requisite number and this deficiency can be made good if people start taking to it, and that too preferably at an age of forty-five instead of fifty.[23]

All these four stages are interdependent. The first stage is essential for the proper development of the individual, and young people need *vanaprastha* teachers to train and guide them. The purity of family life is necessary for the success of the first stage, and a householder requires the guidence of a *vanaprasthi* while a *sanyasi* provides inspiration to all the three. A proper observance of the first two stages would make the observance of the third easy and natural, and this in turn would lead to the fourth.

Marriage

The burden and responsibilities of a householder are not light. He is the very prop of the whole system. Hence life at this stage should be a healthy one. In spite of all their emphasis on the vow of continence, Sarvodaya thinkers do not look down upon marriage, which normaly is essential for a healthy spiritual growth. But then its aim must be properly grasped. Marriage is not a license for giving free rein to one's passions, but a means for the sublimation of sex desire, the fulfilment of unrealised wishes and procreation of children.[24] At the same time it is necessary that it should be a happy marriage, and this depends greatly on the proper selection of the partner. The ultimate choice in the matter should be left to the boys and girls themselves, but the elders may advise. The facts to be considered are if the two have the ability to lead independent lives, if they have some aims beyond the mere satisfaction of physical needs and desires, and if these aims are capable of being harmonised and the two are willing to adjust to each other. The two should also have the desire

to procreate children and have the capacity for it.[25] Rare cases apart, mere platonic friendship would leave deep dissatisfaction, for as Dr. Rabindranath Tagore once pointed out, a woman's fullest fulfilment lies through motherhood.[26] However, if in spite of all precautions, the marriage turns out to be unhappy, divorce should be permitted if there is no other alternative.[27] Since Sarvodaya does not make any distinction between man and man, differences of caste, community, religion and nationality should be no bar to marriages. On the other hand, such marriages deserve to be welcomed provided they fulfil the conditions for a happy family life.

Women

The Sarvodaya thinkers accord women perfect equality with men. They stand for the removal of all their disabilities—religious, social, economic or legal. Vinoba believes that there are no fundamental differences between men and women. The physical differences between them may make for some differences in the spheres of their activities, but they cannot justify the existing discrimination between them found in Indian society.[28] Women should not be confined to household work, though they may devote to it more time than men. Both husband and wife should help each other in bringing up children, managing the household and earning livelihood.[29] The best family is that in which none of them dominates.[30] The socalled chivalrous attitude of men towards women is only an emblem of their inferiority and must cease.[31]

Sarvodaya thinkers are not able to appreciate the present craze for devotion to the physical body in women which is confused with 'modernity'. It neither denotes equality nor her emancipation. Imitation of men is a denial of her individuality and an outcome of inferiority complex. Equality is not to be equated with similarity. To attain equality with man, she must preserve her individuality, her special traits of character. In being herself not only lies her own good, but also that of society. Men have made a mess of the world, and now it is for her to take leadership in her hand and to lead the world towards

non-violence. She can well prove her superiority over man in love and compassion, and an atmosphere of non-violence would be more conducive to her independence.[32]

The woman of today needs fearlessness. She must give up her reliance on man for protection, and be self-protected. The more she is lured by external things, the more she identifies herself with the physical body, the greater would be her slavery. At present she fears man and as long as she fears him, she cannot love him.[33]

Appraisal

Such are the ideas of these thinkers on social organization. In the society pictured by them there is a happy synthesis of the old and the new. The value of an intelligent rural civilization, the dignity of manual labour and its need not only for a healthy physical metabolism but also for spiritual, moral and social health are emphasised. This society would be permeated by a real spirit of equality, which would be reflected to the utmost degree in the externals as well. It would do away with the caste system, but retain its healthy principles to build upon the new society. It would be a classless society in the sense that there would be no vertical divisions into classes and all would share both mannual and intellectual labour to a greater or less extent. Life would be organized on the basis of the *ashram* system so that an individual may have correct perspectives at all periods of life. In such a society exaggerated distinctions would not be made between men and women, and the latter would not try to ape the former. Women would be the real equal of men by acquiring the capacity for independent life, by becoming self-protected, by developing their special individuality, and by not brooking any disability imposed on her.

In all this, the present Sarvodaya thinkers continue with some individual variations the traditions of Gandhiji. However, we find a very great anxiety in Vinobaji that women should break their age-old shackles and take their proper place in society along with men. It is with this object of developing the requisite capacity and leadership among women that he has founded the Brahma

Vidya Mandir (Institute for the knowledge of the Absolute) for women at his old ashram at Paunar, Wardha. Gandhiji attained the first step in the emancipation of the Indian woman and Vinobaji is anxious to complete it.

B. The Economic Structure

In the ancient economic thought of India the centre of activities is man and not wealth, and economics and ethics are interdependent. This is also true of the economic ideas of Gandhiji with whom man was the primary consideration, and economics had not been divorced from ethics.[34] Truth and non-violence are the touchstones to judge all institutions and actions. The present Sarvodaya thinkers are true to that legacy and like Gandhiji are highly critical of the modern western economy based on large-scale industrialism. This economy has taken the two forms of private capitalism and state capitalism, and though the two differ in some respects, they share the common traits of centralisation, progressive machanization and over-emphasis on material ends. The Sarvodaya thinkers consider both highly detrimental to the well-being of the individual and society, and advocate reorganization of the economic life on the basis of decentralisation, self-sufficiency, simplicity of life and cooperation. However, it is conceded that the application of these principles can take different forms in different countries according to the conditions prevailing there, and in a particular country itself, the economy can vary from time to time.[35] To examine the economic ideas of Sarvodaya thinkers it would be better to deal first with their criticisms of modern western economy, and then with the principles of Sarvodaya economy and the picture of the Indian economic life reorganised on their basis.

Criticism of Western Economy

The most objectionable feature of western economy—especially of the capitalist economy—is that it judges and values every thing in terms of money.[36] Money had originally come into vogue as a medium of exchange, and a restricted use of it is certainly convenient and useful; but to accord to it its present high position and to confuse

it with wealth is highly injurious to society. It results in unlimited greed and blinds the vision for a long-range social view. Production is undertaken with a view to profit and not with the object of supplying the needs of society. The moneyed people are able to exploit the poorer sections of society with the result that while the producers of the primary needs of life live in penury, speculators and the producers of luxury articles roll in plenty. To rectify this state of affairs, it becomes necessary to replace the use of money by either some amount of barter or by the use of paper currency crediting the hours of labour spent by an individual.[37] A good medium of exchange must fulfil two conditions. It should faithfully report the value received by one party from another, and it should not change its value in the interval between two transactions. Money, which is taken to represent absolute values, does not fulfil any of these conditions.[38]

Another target of Sarvodaya attack, as already hinted at, is large-scale industrialism. It is urged that it dwarfs human personality by checking the development of intelligence, artistic sense and of character, which implies responsibility. The group in production is too large for the development of fellow-feeling.[39] Secondly, it results in the concentration of power, in civil strife, imperialism and war.[40] Thirdly, it leads to the squandering of natural resources, based as it is on the utilisation of non-renewable resources. Fourthly, centralised production shuts off money from circulation among the masses and depresses their purchasing power.[41] Fifthly, the use of the products of such industries may make us parties to immoral practices since we know nothing of the conditions under which they are produced and supplied.[42] Sixthly, such industries are vulnerable to military attacks.[43] Lastly, they do not suit a country like India with the problem of unemployment and under-employment for its millions.[44]

The protagonists of the system, however, claim many virtues for it. They say that it produces goods in abundance and cheaply, it is necessary for the advancement of

any country and that it provides workers with leisure in which they can develop their creative powers and other faculties. To all this, the Sarvodaya thinkers reply that the seeming cheapness of factory goods is not real and is due to the defective methods of valuation. If the full account were taken of the national cost of unemployment created by it, of the disruption of normal village life, of the many facilities provided by the state to it at the expense of the tax payer, etc., it would be found that many of the factory goods are not cheap.[45] Bharatan Kumarappa observes, "If finance in the way of easy loans is available to the cottage producer, if research is directed to problems relating to the village productions, so that improvements are effected in cottage machinery and technical processes, and if a widespread organisation is established for marketing—all facilities available for the large mill—it is quite possible that the cottage made article will not be more expensive than the mill product".[46] And then, even if the cost of production is less, the cost of distribution is high and counterbalances a good part of that advantage. It may also be added here that cottage industries do not create any social disorganization. To the second claim that large-scale industries are an easy means to the advancement of any country, it may be objected that first of all we must have a clear conception of what constitutes 'advancement'. If it means increase in the industrial potential of a country so as to make it incumbent on it to exploit foreign countries or increase in military power or ever-rising higher standard of living, it is doubtful if it is anything beneficial. If we want non-violence to prevail in the world, we cannot think of armaments and of exploiting other countries. We have to think of producing consumer goods primarily for our internal market only, and for this large-scale industrialization can only prove uneconomical.[47] The third claim too does not stand scrutiny. Of what use is the shortening of labour-hours, when monotonous mechanical work so dehumanizes the worker that he is left with no inclination and energy to use his spare hours for cultural development. In fact, the invention of automatons has left man with still less leisure

and made them more busy. As Pyarelalji says, "Human activities became adjusted to the new facilities and in becoming adjusted absorbed the surplus."[48] Travelling by locomotion has not provided more leisure. People have begun to travel more.

However, Sarvodaya thinkers admit that we cannot do without some centralized industries. They would be of two kinds—key industries and public utilities. These should be run under state control on service motive, and should be considered as necessary evils. Decentralised industries should be mainly relied upon for consumer goods.[49]

Principles of Sarvodaya Economy

(*a*) *Simplicity of life* : The most important principle of Sarvodaya economy is of the simplicity of life. In this, Sarvodaya differs both from Capitalism and Socialism, since both assume that production and consumption of material things are the most important aspects of life and civilization. Sarvodaya distinguishes between 'a high standard of life' and 'a high standard of living' and thinks it even a misnomer to call the present standard of living in the west as 'high'. It would be more appropriate to designate it as 'the complex way of life'.[50]

Simplicity of life should neither be confused with poverty nor asceticism. It signifies a happy balance between poverty and 'affluence', for affluence too does not lead to happiness. Material things are surely of real importance, but only up to a point. There should be enough of wholesome food, fresh air, adequate clothing and clean house, but it is not necessary to surround oneself with articles which are useful only for vulgar display and which consume thought and time for nothing.[51] A craze for multiplicity of goods is destructive of contentment, peace and tranquility. It results in exploitation, enormous waste of nature's materials and human labour, and in ever preparedness for war.[52] Dr. Bharatan Kumarappa correctly observes, "A man whose needs are few such as can be met by himself can afford to raise his head high and refuse to bow to any power which seeks to enslave him. Not

the man with socalled high standard of living. Every new luxury he adopts becomes an additional fetter preventing him from freedom of thought, movement and action."[53] A simple life is more conducive to the exercise of higher faculties. One can live well in comfort and decency without the innumerable things the westerners have got used to.

It is increasingly being realised that mere piling up of material riches is neither conducive to the the welfare of the individual nor of society. Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru who was so anxious to raise the standard of living of the Indian masses admits that such piling up may lead to an emptiness in the inner life of men.[54] A soft living undermines vitality and this realization made Adlai Stevenson observe, "The dreary failure in history of all classes committed to pleasure and profit alone, the vacuity and misery accompanying the sole pursuit of ease, the collapse of the French aristocracy, the corruption of Imperial Rome, all these facts of history do not lose their point because the pleasures of today are no longer the enjoyment of the elite."[55]

The present craze for multiplicity of goods is not natural. It is an artificial demand created by repeated advertisements, for modern industrialism cannot survive without it. It is wrong to identify real prosperity with greater possession of goods. The statistics of suicides, nervous disorders, juvenile crimes etc. do not show that the countries of the west are happy. The Sarvodaya thinkers are not deceived by superficialities, and going deep into the matter they advocate satisfaction with self, which is something spiritual and should not be confused with satisfaction with little.[56]

(*b*) *Decentralization* : It is the second chief principle of Sarvodaya economy. It has been greatly misunderstood as a plea for turning the hands of a clock back, a return to archaic methods of production and a renunciation of the benefit of technological progress. But it is nothing of the sort. The old mode of production was 'non-centralized' but not 'decentralized'. It lacked the capacity to digest and assimilate the advantages of the new technology.[57]

The conception of 'decentralization' is a product of this very machine age and aims "to ensure that the benefits of science and technology enable us to preserve the essence of democracy even while avoiding drudgery and maximizing production and employment."[58]

In more concrete terms, economic decentralization means that as far as possible all enterprises should be in the hands of individuals, carried on not in factories but in their own houses. The unit for which they produce should be strictly limited. It may be a village to which they belong or a small group of adjacent villages, which forms a corporate whole and aims to be self-sufficient in its primary requirements. For some articles the unit of self-sufficiency may even be a province. There is no rigidity about it. Only it is to be borne in mind that as far as possible a village should be self-sufficient in essential needs like food and clothing. For the rest, a village may depend upon industries run by itself in cooperation with neighbouring villages, or where this is not feasible, they may be run by the state for the needs of the region concerned.[59]

'Decentralization' should not be confused with dispersal of industries. Dispersal means scattering of large-scale production units. It does not mean, as decentralization does, small capital investment per unit, less of irksome work and greater scope for the satisfaction of creative instinct, maintenance of the integrity of family life, a large use of renewable resources and ensuring of work in natural surroundings.[60] Dispersal of industry is no remedy for the ills of industrialism. It may mean only greater exploitation of the countryside. In the words of Pyarelal, "It turns the farm into an adjunct to the factory and the countryside into a larder for the non-producing industrial city proletariat to draw upon, but it means absolutely no lessening of the political and economic control of industry and high finance, rather the reverse."[61]

The decentralised industries would make utmost possible use of modern science. It is wrong to confuse science and technology with size. The laws of nature can

well be utilised for the benefit of decentralized industries. That is why Vinobaji says, "It is wrong to think that I do not favour the use of modern science for improving the techniques of village industries. In fact, I think that modern science is not satisfactory and progressive enough."[62] According to the present Sarvodaya thinkers, there is a good deal of misuse of science these days. It has to be made to serve a better way of life. In the words of Jayaprakash Narayan, "Commercialization of science has to be replaced by humanisation of science, instead of science being exploited for power and profit, it has to be used for peace and happiness."[63]

The whole attitude of these thinkers towards the use of machinery and power is pragmatic. According to Vinobaji, science as a science has nothing to do with the forms of technology. What technology is to be adopted is to be decided by particular social situation, the population problem, the land-man ratio, employment situation and so on. As conditions change, new technology may be used.[64] But any acceptable technology should not lead to the exploitation of villagers by others or of the poor villagers by the rich ones; the purpose behind its use should be village self-sufficiency; its benefit should reach all; and it should not cause unemployment. If these conditions are satisfied, electric power or even atomic power may be used.[65]* Vinobaji is of opinion that work for four hours should be enough to provide living to a man, and

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* The question of the use of electric power, nothing to say of atomic power, raises many complicated issues. V. L. Mehta writes, "Before extended use is made of electricity for rural industries, it has to be examined whether it necessarily leads to a reduction in the cost of production, whether for the process or occupations concerned suitable tools and appliances for small-sized operation can be or have been designed and whether for operating the new mechanism the requisite degree of skill is available or can be secured among the existing type of hand-workers whose employment has to be maintained at its present level and, if possible, has to be raised." (Why Decentralization ? pp. 32-33) It is envisaged that "as far as possible the generation of power will be organised on a decentralized basis, and the economic necessity of utilisihg all kinds of power available in a locality will not be lost sight of". (Planning for Sarvodaya, p. 90).

if any village industry cannot fulfil this condition, it should be given up. He also favours the use of electricity and gas for domestic purposes.[66]

Such decentralization would have many advantages. As pointed out by R. B. Gregg, the economic strength and efficiency of small-scale, decentralized, intensive industry lies in its low fixed charges, lower power costs, low expenses for repair, maintenance and depreciation, low inventory charges, rapid turn-over of material and product, little or no storage and transportaion costs, security of employment, psychological and physiological healthiness and adaptation to man's nature, its moral and aesthetic possibilities, its freedom and room for sound individual development.[67] It would also stop the exploitation of villages and lead to a more equitable distribution of income and to a more peaceful and cooperative life. Lastly, it suits Indian conditions very well. It was no Sarvodayist but a British economist who said in a B. B. C. talk, "Experience in Switzerland and Japan goes to prove that suitable machines can be devised for cottage industries, provided inventors free themselves from their preconceived notion that large-scale machines are always preferable. They would have to apply their ingenuity to the problems of the village industry, and invent small machines of simple design with as few parts as possible and with rotational motion. Full employment in India will not be possible without inventions of this type."[68]

However, the general body of economists and thinkers have been decrying Gandhiji's idea of economic decentralization ever since he put it forward. Many of their criticisms have already been indirectly answered, for they are based on a misunderstanding of 'decentralization' itself. But there are others which deserve specific mention and examination. First, it is argued that if we want to raise the living standard of the masses and to provide them with more leisure, we cannot do without large scale production of consumer goods in big factories. Secondly, even if it becomes possible to decentralize industry with the use of atomic energy, the production of atomic power

itself will involve so much central control that it would nullify greatly the very basis of decentralization. Thirdly, a programme of decentralisation will make international trade and commerce difficult if not impossible. What the world needs today is some sort of world planning of which national, provincial and village planning are a part and parcel. Fourthly, the hand-made goods are likely to be more expensive and they cannot stand in competition with mill-products. There can be no all-round subsidies because they have to be made up from somewhere. Fifthly, even admitting that decentralization is a step in the right direction, it is possible to over do it. Lastly, there is a danger in India that decentralization may accentuate the already existing centrifugal forces in the country.[69]

Of these objections, the last two are more in the nature of warnings which the supporters of Sarvodaya economy would do well to keep in mind. The rest deserve discussion. It is wrong to doubt the capacity of decentralized industries to raise the standard of living of the people and to provide them with more leisure. Decentralization stands for a new scientific technology which would produce enough and at the same time provide enough leisure and rest to all. Moreover, it is wrong to identify the standard of living with multiplicity of goods and leisure with idleness. Sarvodaya correctly rejects this interpretation. Complete decentralization is certainly not possible and Sarvodaya admits it when it accepts the need of some large-scale industries, but it would benefit man to strive for decentralization to the greatest extent possible. Once the goal is clear and the will is there, science would certainly find a way to lessen centralization. There is no doubt a danger in the use of atomic energy of undesirable centralization and hence it would need all circumspection. To argue that decentralization would hinder international trade and commerce, is to forget that they are not ends in themselves. The old science of economics would not serve our purpose today. Imperialist economists propounded such ideas and it was in their national interests to do so, but it resulted in untold misery to the people of Asia and Africa. The days are past when any country

would like to depend on foreign countries for its consumer goods if it can be avoided. The principle of decentralization is not opposed to world planning at all provided it is based on and it begins with planning of the villages. A world plan which aims to make coutries dependent on each other for their primary needs, would be a wrong type of planning. Moreover, world planning is still a dream. Lastly, the objection that goods produced by cottage industries are costly is based on a superficial view and has already been considered. The critics forget that while the subsidies granted to cottage products are quite visible, various invisible subsidies, both direct and indirect, are also paid to large-scale industries and their costs to society are enormous. Who does not know that even the long established large-scale industries in India are dependent on protection granted to them and they cannot stand on their own legs? Many research and technical institutions serve these industries at public expense. Many other examples of indirect subsidies can be cited. But in their case these very critics would argue that these subsidies and protection are in the interest of the country. If so, they are also justified in the case of cottage industries, because they are both necessary and desirable in view of the unhealthy nature of large-scale industrialism and the peculiar conditions of India with its abundance of man power and the problem of unemployment and under-employment for its millions.

(*c*) *Self-sufficiency* : The third principle of Sarvodaya economy is of self-sufficiency. It means that a village, and if that is not possible, a region of some ten or twenty villages should be self-sufficient in their basic requirements of food, clothing and shelter. Only the surplus production should be exchanged for other commodities needed but not produced by them. Thus under Sarvodaya economy production would be primarily for neighbours, and it would be simultaneous with distribution and consumption. Sarvodaya thinkers insist that the problem of distribution should not be separated from that of production.[70]

Such self-sufficiency has many other merits to commend it. It is essential if the people are not to become helpless and be at the mercy of their rulers. To cite J. C. Kumarappa, "Self-reliance is the basis of freedom, while dependence on others is the essence of slavery."[71] Secondly, it devotes cooperative endeavour and that too of a higher order in that it is cooperation not only between those who pursue a common trade, but between all those who live together in a village. It binds all people together not only in economic ties but also human ties.[72] Thirdly, democracy for its success needs independent local leadership, and in this the local leadership of the local economic undertaking can help. Lastly, in time of emergency like economic depressions, it would make possible the use of manpower and materials somewhat independently of the general prevailing economy.[73]

This principle of self-sufficiency also has been objected to on many grounds. It is doubted if villages can be made self-sufficient in their basic needs. There are regions which can never hope to achieve it in food. This stress on self-sufficiency on the production side does not do credit to man's capacity for cooperative endeavour. Secondly, this principle limits the benefits of specialization and division of labour.[74] Thirdly, it might be argued that once it is agreed to widen the area of self-sufficiency from a village to a group of villages or a region, why not extend it further still so that the area becomes big enough to be served with efficient production ?[75] However, on reflection it is found that none of these objections are serious enough to invalidate the principle. Such regions as would never attain self-sufficiency in food would ever be exceptions, and exceptions prove the rule. It may also be urged that the present day industrialism itself is one of the major causes of food deficiency. It is time to take a warning from it. Sarvodaya as a practical philosophy has advocated regional self-sufficiency if it is not possible in a village, but it would not be correct to argue for the extension of this area on the plea of efficient production. The socalled efficiency in production is only one aspect of the matter. If other aspects, and more important ones,

militate against it, efficiency has to be sacrified. The same is true of the benifits of specialization and division of labour.

(*d*) *Cooperation* : The fourth principle of Sarvodaya economy intimately connected with that of 'self-sufficiency', is of 'cooperation' or 'corporate economy'. The very ideal of Sarvodaya implies that laws of the family should govern individual and social life. In other words, Sarvodaya stands for a cooperative way of life, and the principle of 'corporate economy' is only its application in the sphere of the economic life of society.

This clearly differentiates Sarvodaya from Capitalism, wherein competition plays an important part. Sarvodaya cannot reconcile itself to a competitive economy, which, no matter how much modified, remains an application of the law of jungle in the sphere of economic life and leads to every form of injustice, exploitation and moral corruption. At the same time, the 'corporate economy' of Sarvodaya should not be confused with the collectivization of the communists. First, the cooperation of Sarvodaya is born of the growth of community spirit in the people and the degree of that cooperation depends on the degree of that spirit. It is not an imposition from above. Vinobaji writes, "Cooperation is an eternal principle of life. But it is only when it is given voluntarily and with full knowledge that it is useful and that it is non-violent, and only then is it true cooperation."[76] Secondly, it does not involve any enslavement of the individuals who are independent and capable of acting on their own even apart from the group, while collectivization implies a combination where the individuals are reduced to such dependence on the group that they cannot function apart from the group.[77] Sarvodaya is not prepared to sacrifice individual liberty.

This principle, as applied to village life, means cooperation in cultivation, sowing and consumption.[78] This is inherent in the philosophy of *Gramdan*, and that is the reason why J. C. Kumarappa proposes the establishment of multipurpose cooperative societies in

villages.[79]* In its application to large-scale industries, it means that they should be carried on either cooperatively by some villages or by the state purely on service basis and they are not to compete with but rather supplement cottage production.

The New Society

With the above ideas, Sarvodaya seeks to build up a society with a bias towards rural civilization, in which industries would be decentralized and villages would be as self-sufficient as possible. The desire for a high but simple life would replace the present craze for multiplicity of goods, cooperation would take the place of competition and community spirit would animate society.

The Sarvodaya thinkers in view of their circumstances have generally concerned themselves with the reconstruction of rural India. They advocate village proprietorship over land, though they do not prescribe any particular type of farming. It has been left to villages to experiment and discover for themselves the most desirable type of farming. However, the prevailing trend in full *gramdan* villages is to reserve some land for collective cultivation and to divide the rest between families on the basis of their needs and the principle of equality. After some periods this distribution is expected to be revised in view of the then changed conditions.[80] Vinobaji's personal preference is for cooperative farming but he would begin it with voluntary service cooperatives.[81] This approach seems to be the best in the present conditions for it is highly doubtful if the available talent in most Indian villages is equal to the task of cooperative farming. If insisted upon it shall only lead to bureaucratization. The common village land is to be cultivated by the free labour of all the village families and its produce utilized for public purposes.[82] The village council would realize the government revenue, and this preferably in kind.[83] Men

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* Vinobaji advises establishment of cooperative shops for all sales and purchases in gramdan villages.

(Bhoodan Ganga, Vol V p. 10)

and women would receive equal wages and they would be largely paid in kind.[84]

Since the villagers are to be self-sufficient in their primary needs, a balanced cultivation is advocated; and unless the special nature of the soil demands it, the use of tractors is disfavoured.[85] A part of the village crop is to be given to the village artisans, *vaidyas* (doctors) and others who serve the village, while one-sixth of the village income is to be donated for the maintenance of village orphans, invalids and old people, and to tide over any calamity. Marriages are to be performed as a public ceremony at the village expense. Old debts would be taken over by the village, and individuals would not be permitted to contract new loans.[86]

The new village communities would be agro-industrial. The villages themselves would convert the village raw material into finished goods and use mostly the articles manufactured by them. It would have a shop for all sales and purchases made by the villagers.[87] Vinobaji pleads for a labour currency, valid within the jurisdiction of the village. In dealing with other villages, conventional coins may be used. The prices of common needs should remain constant. At the village shop, every householder would have his 'labour hours' entered into a register to his credit, and he would be able to get things against them.[88] This shop may be run by a multipurpose cooperative society whose other functions would include stocking of raw materials for industries and food grains for the villagers, marketing of surplus products, supply and distribution of seeds, manures, improved implements, tools etc.[89]

Many village industries would be of owner-worker type. Industries beyond the family capacity would be run by the village itself, while others beyond the village capacity would be under regional, provincial and national authorities. No matter who the employer be, there would be self-government in such industries as are neither of the owner-worker type nor are run by the cooperatives of producers, and a joint body representing employers, technicians, managers and workers would be set up for internal

self-government.[90] Sri Jayaprakash Narayan further envisages that in each communal area every line of industry or business would be organized in associations and these would be further federated into an Economic Council. Such councils would exist in every region, district, province and country, and would be represented in the respective communal political bodies. These associations and councils would have the power to make rules to govern the activities of their member institutions within the rules and laws of the community.[91]

Such is the picture of the Sarvodaya society as called from the writings and speeches of the various thinkers. As regards cities, they are not favourably disposed towards them. They would certainly not disappear, but their importance would be reduced and their rapid growth checked.[92] The number of small townships would increase and they would provide most of the city amenities. Their inhabitants would have more of community spirit and they would not present many of the sociological problems which are the bane of modern city life.

Certain comments might be made here on the picture drawn above. It seems that the village life would be so much communalised as to submerge the individual. It is possible that this fear might be more imaginary than real, but even then all precautions will have to be taken for the purpose. However, it would not be proper to object to the village ownership of all land and its periodical distribution by the community, because there is no insistence on collective farming. Private ownership of land might have been conducive to social and individual welfare in times past, but in the context of Indian conditions today, socialization of land at the village level is essential. It is not certain if Vinobaji's idea of labour currency would prove workable under modern conditions, while Jayaprakash Narayan's economic councils need further elucidation and they might prove unworkable. The thorny problem of the apportionment of seats among the various lines of industry and business in these councils and in the communal political bodies, might defy all solution.

Appraisal

The economic ideas of Sarvodaya have been examined above along with many of their criticisms. but there still remain a few general objections which merit consideration. It has been said that there is nothing in Sarvodaya economy to thrill the people and to move them to action,[93] and this has been attributed to two causes--India cannot tread a lonely path and modern industrialism is not an unmitigated evil. There is something in the machine products which has a permanent attraction for mankind.[94]. The second objection raised is that instead of squarely facing the problem, Sarvodaya tries to run away from reality. Centralization is inevitable and we have to find some other way than decentralization to reform the situation. Similarly, to insist on self-sufficiency as a means of preventing exploitation is like not building a house for the fear that rats might make holes in it.[95] Thirdly, it is wrong to think that large-scale production technique is injurious. The present defects of industrialism are due to the failure of distributive machinery to keep pace with productive capacity. Their cure lies in better distribution and in inspiring men with goodwill and love, and in teaching them to live together.[96]

One must admit that so far Sarvodaya economy has failed to rouse men to action. This is really a matter for serious thought. But it does not necessarily denote any unsoundness in the principles of Sarvodaya economy. It is also true that modern industrialism is not an unmitigated evil and that it would be difficult to establish Sarvodaya economy in India if the world goes the other way. However, the demerits of large-scale industrialism far outweigh its advantages, and the good of the world lies in the acceptance of the fundamental principles of Sarvodaya economy and applying them progressively in a way that suits a particular country. Many instances can be cited of things which public likes, though they are not conducive to its welfare. The modern economy is only of that kind. Hence this objection only signifies that Sarvodaya thinkers and workers should analyse their movement and remove

those shortcomings which stand in the way of their success. The Sarvodaya attitude towards the use of electricity and atomic power denotes an attempt in that direction, and this encourages me to think that they would have no objection to Dr. R. M. Lohia's 'small-unit machines' involving the capitalization of one thousand rupees per worker.[97] I also hold that even E. F. Schumacher's 'intermediate technology' in which investment per work-place may generally amount to one thousand rupees deserves their consideration.[98] It is possible that more of such technology already exisits than is realised and if it does not exist, it is a problem which the engineers should not find too difficult to tackle. As regards the principles of decentralization and self-sufficiency, they are so sound that they cannot be given up, but there is no question of their rigid application. Lastly, it is a vain hope to believe that the ills of modern industrialization can be removed by better distribution. Most of them are inherent in that system and it is doubtful if socialism can prove any cure for them. The people too cannot be inspired by goodwill and love unless conditions for greed and avarice are removed. Socialism which shares with capatalism the emphasis on high standard of living cannot do so. Moreover, it also intensifies some of the evils of capitalism. Therefore the only remedy for the present malaise lies in the acceptance of the four principles of Sarvodaya economy. They constitute a synthesis of the virtues of the old with the virtues of the new system, and if there can be a better synthesis, the Sarvodaya thinkers are ever prepared to modify their ideas and to accept it.

The picture of the economic structure of Sarvodaya society, as it emerges from the writings and speeches of the present thinkers, is decidedly more detailed than we get from the writings of Gandhiji. Through the cumulative efforts of these thinkers the principles of Sarvodaya economy have been stated very clearly removing many of the misunderstandings that persisted in clinging to Gandhiji's economic thought. For the most part they had been due to the general impression that Gandhiji was totally opposed to machinery, an impression which remained

indelible in spite of all his attempts to qualify his earlier 'crude language' which he had used for machinery in his 'Hind Swaraj'. The attitude of the present thinkers as a whole towards machinery is pragmatic, and Vinobaji has many a time made his position very explicit in this respect. It seems that he is prepared to assign a higher place to modern technology in life than Gandhiji. Thus there is no ground for thinking that Sarvodaya is opposed to scientific technology. It is simply not deceived by size and all that it says is that man's total welfare should be taken into account before accepting or rejecting any particular technology. It would be wrong to take only 'an economist's view' of the processes of production and distribution.

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CHAPTER VII.

SARVODAYA SOCIETY—ITS POLITICAL STRUCTURE

The present Sarvodaya thinkers have done some hard thinking on the subject of the political structure of a non-violent society, they are anxious to establish. Besides criticizing the present day political institutions, they have made constructive suggestions for their change. The first attempt in this direction had been made by Shriman Narayan in his 'Gandhian Constitution for India', published in 1946 when independence did not appear to be far off; but since the death of Gandhiji and the attainment of independence, the most prominent Sarvodaya thinkers have also been suggesting changes in the existing polity and their ideas about the new society are interspersed both in systematic books and booklets as well as in speeches, some of which have been published under suitable titles. Jayaprakash Narayan's 'A Plea for Reconstruction of Indian Polity' and 'Swaraj for the People' deserve special mention. For a proper understanding of their proposals for change, it is first of all necessary to deal with their attitude towards the 'state', the most important of the existing political institutions.

The State in Sarvodaya

Sarvodaya as a political doctrine is mildly anarchist. It regards the emergence of the 'state' as a form of social organization, an improvement over the earlier condition of violent anarchy. It marks a stage in the evolution of society from the condition of violence to that of non-violence. But it is no more than an intermediary stage, and the social fulfilment lies in rising to the higher condition when men would need no coercive authority at all to regulate their conduct.[1] To Vinobaji, 'Swaraj' connotes a condition when none would exercise authority over anybody else.[2] The Sarvodaya thinkers are criti-

cal of the 'state' for three reasons. First, it demands loyalty to itself in preference to loyalty towards conscience and humanity;[3] secondly, its ultimate sanction lies in its coercive power and this militates against the very principle of non-violence; and lastly, it maintains a big administrative apparatus and army at the expense of the toilers and producers, and thus serves as an agency for exploitation of the people.[4] In short, the state does not stand the test of truth and non-violence. Therefore, what is advocated is 'spiritual anarchism',[5] a coercion-free social order in which the people are developed and enlightened enough to keep themselves on the right path. In this order the government would not be totally absent but would continue to exist like the alarm chain of a railway compartment to be used whenever emergency arises.[6]

Thus the entire trend of Sarvodaya is from the statism of the present towards maximization of individual liberty.[7] But liberty is not license. It is valuable only so far as it is essential for the fullest development of human personality, and it can be regulated and controlled for that purpose.[8] Sarvodaya lays much greater emphasis on duties than on rights. Vinobaji maintains that freedom is only one of the fundamental rights and none can have rights if he does not discharge corresponding duties.[9] This view is at one with that of Gandhiji, who felt that rights were nothing but duties well-performed and all rights accrued from duties.[10]

The political ideal of Sarvodaya, therefore, is an anarchism of its own variety. It concedes that a fully stateless society is beyond the reach of man, and the goal of human endeavour can only be to reduce the power and sphere of the state to the minimum.[11] There is also no question of the abolition of the state all at once. Its authority is only to be effaced gradually till it becomes imperceptible, and this is to be achieved through the development of *Jan Shakti* or the non-violent power of the masses.[12] however, Sarvodaya resembles western anarchism in that it also advocates a philosophy of society without the active governance of the state. This has been termed *lokniti* or

the politics of the people. It further agrees with that anarchism when it believes that the state authority would be scarcely needed if the institution of private property disappears and 'non-possession' forms the basis of the social structure.[13]

Lokniti

Lokniti is a comprehensive term which denotes simultaneously a way of life, a form of social order and a method. As a way of life, it stands for the self-regulation of individual conduct and for a habit to act on one's own initiative. As a form of social order, it envisages a society in which police and military will have little to do, and the law will interfere least with life. A man will have the utmost freedom of action but will not abuse it for the social order would be such as to discourage it and encourage the social tendencies in him. As a theory of method, it stands for social change in a manner that would maintain man's freedom of action. In other words, it would be wrought through conversion and not coercion, through persuasion and not suppression.[14]

The defect with present-day society is that instead of being based on *lokniti*, the politics of the people, it is based on *rajniti*, the politics of power. These two can well be contrasted with each other. While *rajniti* leads to the strengthening of the hold of the state as the chief instrument of social welfare, *lokniti* encourages self-effort and initiative on the part of the people and wants them to promote their own welfare through voluntary and autonomous institutions. Naturally then, while *rajniti* results in the extension and intensification of administration, in the *lokniti* develops self-control and self-discipline in the people. In *rajniti*, people compete for the acquisition of power, whereas in *lokniti* there is an anxiety to develop the civic character of society through service and cooperation. The former results in an emphasis on rights, the latter lays stress on the proper performance of duties.[15] However, the two can be reconciled. The aim of the politics of a democratic state should itself be to evolve into *lokniti* and thus it can be made to cooperate in realising it.[16]

Criticism of Present Democracy

It is *lokniti* alone which can form the basis of a true democracy. The Sarvodaya thinkers accept that democracy is the best form of polity so far conceived by human ingenuity, but they assert that the existing democracies have too many defects to be accepted as they are. They regret that India, instead of producing an Indian edition of democracy, more suited to her soil and genius, should have adopted after independence the western model of parliamentary government.[17] But their criticism of democracy though based mainly on Indian experiences is generally applicable to all democratic governments.

The most fundamental defect of democracy is that it ignores the organic nature of society. It bases itself on the individual voter and the whole process rests on the arithmetic of votes leading to an atomization of the individual.[18] Secondly, though supposedly based on the consent of the governed, it ultimately depends upon the army and the force of weapons for its existence. Experience has shown that the protecting hand has often held the assassin's dagger. This has happened not only in some of the newly independent Afro-Asian countries, but in France as well.[19] Thirdly, the present western type of democracy is a superstructure built on the foundations of capitalism. It is ideally suited to maintain capitalistic property rights and relations, and if it is compelled to modify them, it does so only to the least possible extent. Moreover, some other undesirable features of this inheritance continue to persist therein. The insatiable desire for higher and higher standard of living makes people follow those who promise to pay the highest price, and competition is still considered to be of the highest value. Greed leads to conflict on the one side and to bureaucratic oligarchy on the other.[20] Fourthly, it is only a formal democracy. It is only in name that authority resides in the people and that government is merely their servant. Representatives once elected do what they like, and it is a delusion to think that the people can control policy by changing them at the next election. In modern conditions, their tenures of

five years or so are equivalent to the old regimes of fifty years. Within their five years they can do so much and of such a nature that their successors would not be able to undo it.[21] Fifthly, it has led to so much centralization that every aspect of social life has come under state control. Those elected to power may be good and noble, but it does not alter the verdict of history that centralization of authority always acts as a corrosive to human nature.[22] Lastly, since the present democracy is only a democratic oligarchy in its practical form, it is doubtful if the free spirit of man would even remain satisfied with it.[23]

The Sarvodaya Democracy

However, in spite of all this criticism of the present day democracy, the Sarvodaya thinkers subscribe to the democratic ideal. They believe in equality, in the worth and dignity of the individual person and in positive freedom. But what they stand for is a democracy based on non-violence, which would not need police and army for its protection and existence, and would not consist merely of formal institutions.[24] Theirs would be as much as possible a 'participatory democracy'*, and it would do away with centralised control. All this makes Sarvodaya reject many prevailing conceptions and institutions, namely, the conception of the welfare state, the majority principle, the party system and even the present method of direct elections. It would replace them by welfare society, decisions by consensus of opinion, partyless democracy and either a modified system of direct elections or of indirect elections for choosing representatives to provincial and national legislatures.

(*a*) *Welfare Society and not Welfare State* : Centralization is one of the worst enemies of real democracy even when it takes the garb of a 'Welfare State', which has come to be looked upon as a political ideal or rather the logical

* Sri Shankerrao Deo would modify the famous Lincolnian definition of democracy to 'the management of the people, for the people and by the people'. (*Bhoodan Yajna*, 30.6.1961, *p.* 3)

end of political democracy. Hence the welfare state has been one of the main targets of Sarvodaya attack. Sri K. G. Mashruwala writes, "We do want every person from the moment of conception till death to enjoy the objectives of the Welfare State, but if this can be done only by making him from birth to death something like an A, B, or C class prisoner of the State, under the outward semblance of democracy, it is much better to live as we have lived from the birth of humanity till now, in some sort of hard struggle for existence than be comfortable well-kept animals by a small powerful group of our own species".[25] Thus what Sarvodaya opposes is not welfare, but a welfare state, and this opposition is based on several grounds. A welfare state robs the citizens of their initiative and will to endeavour which are at the root of all progress. It leaves no scope for the development of the natural virtues of love, compassion, sharing for the common good etc.[26] Thus it drawfs the development of human personality and truely deserves to be nick-named 'Ill-fare State.'[27] The concentration of power it entails, makes a few individuals arbiters of human destiny.[28] It threatens to enslave man by totalitarianism.[29] Moreover, the welfare state is simply an attempt to mitigate the evils of unbridled capitalism so as to preserve the class structure of society.[30] Hence in the place of this paternal but disabling state, Sarvodaya thinkers envisage a society wherein the people themselves would plan and carry out welfare work for themselves. The state authority may exist to inspire and encourage them in this task and to render help when they need it.[31]

This unique attitude of abhorrence towards the welfare state makes Sarvodaya thinkers more original than and different from the politicians of the present-day world. They would not woo the masses with promises of ever more varied social welfare in exchange for nothing. They expect that nothing should be expected for nothing, and that there is greater virtue in self-help and hard work.[32] They are able to do so because, first, they do not share with capitalism and communism their too much emphasis on the possession of material wealth. Secondly, they are

attracted not by power politics which increases the authority of the state and thereby the power of those who control the state, but by 'strength politics' which seeks to build up the strength of the people and thereby to create a more sturdy and lasting social order. The way to it lies in educating the people regarding the need of self-reliance and by training them to improve their lot by their own initiative and endeavour.

(*b*) *Decision by Consensus of Opinion* : The present-day democracy works on bare majority principle, which is inconsistent with the very conception of Sarvodaya which stands for the good of all. Among the Sarvodaya thinkers, Vinobaji is the most critical of it. This principle, an axiom of western democracy, originated, as pointed out by Erich Fromm, in opposition to and as an alternative to the minority rule of a king or feudal leaders. It was then presumed that it was better for the majority to be in the wrong than for the minority to impose its will on the majority. It does not, however, mean that the majority is always right, though the present tendency is to presume that the majority opinion is at least morally superior to that of the minority.[33]

The experience of working this principles has made even European writers on government quite sceptical about its validity. But they support it because of practical necessity. The underlying principle of democracy is that the will of the people must prevail and this implies unanimity. But since unanimity is well-nigh impossible in practice, a majority view is taken to be the nearest equivalent to the will of the people, and three arguments may be advanced in support of this arrangement. First, since majority is expected to command greater physical force to impose its will, it is safer to go by its opinion. Secondly, since democracy postulates equal worth of every individual conscience, the majority opinion has a better title to be accepted. Lastly, if the right of minority to rule is accepted, an insuperable difficulty arises as to what minority should be accorded this right.[34] In short, the argument for the principle is either that of convenience or of the

fear that it is not safe to go against the majority view. There is no moral justification for the system, though the second argument takes up the garb of ethics. None can deny that there are qualitative differences in men, though for the purpose of computation, it is an elusive element. However, it is really the first argument that majority commands greater physical and mental power which lies at the root of the majority principle.[35]

But to base democratic practice on such dubious ground is a negation of the very purpose of democracy. First, there is no guarantee that majority would be able to compel minority to accept its point of view ; and, secondly, the very idea of force should find no place in an argument for democracy. Thus a majority, as majority, should not matter. Any form of government to be called a democracy should be able to elicit and enlist, as far as is humanly possible, the thought, the will and the general capacity of everyone of its members.[36] In the words of Ernest Barker, "It must be a government depending on the mutual interchange of ideas, on mutual criticism of the ideas interchanged, and on the common and agreed choice of the idea which emerges triumphant from the ordeal of interchange and criticism."[37] The decisions in a truly democratic government, therefore, should not merely be the decisions of the majority, but they must reflect compromises in which all the ideas are reconciled and which can be acceptable to all because they bear the imprint of all.[38]

The problem is how to attain it. It cannot be left merely to the goodwill of the majority. Some such technique has to be adopted as would make the tyranny of the majority impossible. Hence Vinoba advocates the principle of the consensus of opinion or of an overwhelming majority for arriving at any decision.[39] In this he has been influenced by the old Indian tradition of viewing unanimity as the voice of God, and the practice of Quakers to defer a decision till there is no active opposition to it. The conditions in India with religious, caste and linguistic differences specially demand the abandonment of the

majority principle to make the minorities give up fear of the majority and to make both the minority and the majority realise their responsibilities.*

It has been argued that the system of the consensus of opinion would provide a minority with a veto on all social decisions.[40] This danger seems to be real in the present state of the psychology and habits of men. But it can all be changed for they are based on the wrong assumption that there are conflicting interests in society and there is nothing like common good. By proper training and education people can be made to look at things from the point of view of the common good and not to press their opposition too far against any overwhelming majority. Thus this principle would not prove unsuited to build a new social order. The Sarvodaya thinkers are not individuals 'impatient of all social restrictions which are inevitable in social cooperation'. They are rather highly socially conscious individuals anxious to change the unsocial attitude and habits prevailing in society.

The above view is supported by the fact that all over the world the pre-individualist societies managed their affairs by methods which aimed at and achieved such decisions on all matters of common concern.[41] It is the rise of individualised self-consciousness which destroyed the old social unity, but now it is again being realised that society is an organism, whose health demands that it should act as a whole. Hence the need now is, as pointed out by Marjorie Sykes, that the individual human being, without letting go the previous achievements of personal freedom and responsibility, should be re-integrated into society as a fully mature member of the team.[42]

This process of decision by consensus of opinion can very well begin in modern India, has as been suggested by Sri Shriman Narayan with village *Pan-*

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* H. Finer is of opinion that it is extremely difficult to maintain the assumption of majority rule in a state where there are persistent racial, class or cultural differences. (The Theory and Practice of Modern Government, *p.* 82).

chayats (Executives), *Panchayat Samitis* (Regional Councils) and *Zila Parishads* (District Councils). Rather, it is necessary for their success. It could be achieved partly through the process of intensive education and training of the rural masses and partly by offering certain material and financial incentives to those *panchayats* or *panchayat samitis* which conducted work in a spirit of humanity and harmony. This incentive could be in the shape of a greater share in the land revenue.[43] Once such a beginning has been made with success, it should not be difficult to extend the system to higher bodies of government. Therefore the system of decisions by consensus is both desirable and practicable, and is the only method to mitigate the evils of the majority principle.

(*c*) *Partyless Democracy* : Though regarded as a sort of 'must' for democracy, one of its greatest internal difficulties and one which has brought it to ill-repute is the institution of political parties. The aim of Sarvodaya is to shape and develop the body-politic on a pattern in which the existence of parties would be ruled out.* The whole system of political parties is inconsistent with the fundamental approach of Sarvodaya. A party, as its very name implies, stands only for a part of society. It is a sort of conspiracy against the rest of the people.[44] As such allegiance to a party is inconsistent with loyalty to society, with the good of all, which is the fundamental aim of Sarvodaya. And the existence of political parties works against democracy, for, as M. N. Roy pointed out, with the rise of the party system, the idea of popular sovereignty became a constitutional fiction.[45]

This theoretical objection to the existence of political parties finds practical confirmation even in the far advanced and politically conscious democracies of the west. The experience of India after independence has been far more unfortunate. With their vulture eyes fixed on the seats-

* The Radical Humanists in India also advocate partyless democracy. They have put up their case in a more systematic manner. Their arguments have been found very useful in the discussion of this topic.

of authority, the parties have neglected the good of the country as a whole. In their anxiety to win power, they have intensified casteism, linguism, provincialism and such other tendencies as are inimical to the progress and unity of the country. The partisan spirit enters into every problem, making it more complicated. Their mutual recriminations and bickerings have wasted the national energy and disgusted the people. All this ultimately reacts on the prestige and popularity of democracy itself. That this is not only so with an underdeveloped country like India, is borne by the remarks of a reputed British scholar himself. To quote Prof. Ernest Barker, "Purity has revolted against corruption; patriotism has revolted against inefficiency added to corruption; and in the name both of purity and of patriotism, party politics and democracy at large have been brought to the bar of judgement."[46]

The charge-sheet against political parties is a long one. One of the very serious charges is that the system is immoral in that it gives birth to demagogy, depresses political ethics and puts a premium on unscrupulousness and aptitude for manipulation and intrigue. The rigidity of the party system makes individuals act against their conscience. Advantage is taken of the passing moods and passions of the people. Local grievances are exploited and policies advocated with a view to gain or retain power even if they are against public good.[47] Secondly, the effect of the system on the public is not wholesome. It kills talent, initiative and sensitiveness for moral values, and justice in the ordinary man. It emasculates the people and reduces them to the position of sheep who have only to choose their shepherds to look after their welfare. The political parties have become the real arbiters of people's destiny.[48] Thirdly, they are anti-democratic. Their internal structure is essentially autocratic or oligarchic. Their general development tends to emphasize their growing deviation from democracy, since it is towards centralization, tightening of discipline and transformation of representatives into voting machines. They lead to the rule of caucus or coterie.[49] Lastly, the whole system does

not lead to the good of the people. It involves waste of energy and has all the dangers of sectarianism and fanaticism. They create dissensions where unity is called for.[50]

These evils are admitted by all. However, difference arises over the desirability of the abolition of the system itself. The general tendency both in India and elsewhere is to point out to the indispensability of the system and the other advantages that accrue from it, and to advocate a reform of the system and not its complete extinction.* It is argued that political parties are essential for the successful working of representative democracy. It is a twentieth century mechanism designed to solve the problem of how to bring the 'people', the new mass voters, into the political community.[51] In a large country the alternative would be chaos. They are essential to educate the voters, to utilise the machinery for building up the kind of society desired, and, if in opposition, to act as a watch-dog of democracy. They do all this by framing political issues for the public, selecting candidates, establishing a collective and continuing political responsibility, serving as agencies of civic education and keeping the interest of the people alive.[52] It is feared that without them the individual would be atomized.[53] It would be difficult for him to make choice among the various candidates, and the motley crowd elected to the legislature would have no binding tie among its members so that any legislation and government would become impossible. Moreover, political parties are bound up with class differences and it is not possible to abolish them. The American Fathers thought that they could do without them, but soon they came to be formed. Hence a partyless democracy is a mirage and any attempt to transform it into reality would be dangerous.[54]

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* Acharya Kripalani is also a staunch advocate of a reformed party system. On this matter he has not been able to agree with other Sarvodaya thinkers. His advice is that Sarvodaya should have a parliamentary wing of its own and should not keep aloof from power politics. (Sarvodaya and Democracy, *pp*. 9, 10, 12 & 13).

It is also argued that the party system has some additional advantages. A partyless democracy needs for its success greater political consciousness, social equality, faith in the purity of means, indirect elections, non-violent dispositions etc. In their absence parliamentary democracy with direct elections and party system would work better.[55] It is less dangerous in the sense that this system proves less conservative and more favourable to the left. The suppression of political parties would paralyse the left and leave the field clear to conservative forces to assert themselves.* Lastly, it is also feared that the abolition of party system is likely to deprive us of a peaceful and non-violent method of changing the government. It would leave people with no other option but revolution.[56]

Such are the various arguments on the basis of which the abolition of political parties is opposed as fraught with dangers, and what is recommended is only the reform of the system. It is urged that other institutions like panchayats and cooperatives have also defects, but their abolition is not thought of. Then why suggest a special treatment for the party system ? Let it also be reformed, and this is possible.[57] All this merits a close examination.

Now the need and the advantages claimed for political parties are refuted in practice. It is highly doubtful if they really educate public opinion. What they rather do is to exploit the lack of political consciousness, the ignorance and the prejudices of the voters. As Aldous Huxley says, " The political merchandisers appeal only to the weaknesses of voters, never to their political strength. They make no attempt to educate the masses into becoming fit for self-government; they are content merely to manipulate and exploit them. "[58] It is also doubtful if an opposition party can serve as corrective to one in power. The experience is that the opposition with its eye on the seats of

* B. T. Ranadive writes, ' The oppressed class cannot liberate itself without organising itself into a party. India's teaming millions cannot erect a new social order unless they are led by their party to take power '. (Sarvodaya and Communism, p. 28).

power suffers from defects similar to those of the party in power. Hence it is incapable of purifying it. Real education of the public and purification of political life can only be brought about by a body of sacrificing and alert people who keep themselves above the struggle for the acquisition of authority.[59]

No doubt, political parties do serve some purpose, and that is why the system finds advocates, but their disadvantages far outweigh their advantages, and this is all the more true of India. Maurice Duverger admits that the pluralist system of parties applied to the countries of archaic social structure, in which the mass of the people is uneducated, prevents the establishment of true democracy.[60] There are certain compulsions of a backward economy as well, and they demand a national front based on agreement on the fundamentals of national policy with full freedom of expression on matters of details.[61] The Sarvodaya thinkers are attempting to get the advantage of a national front or the single party system through the voluntary cooperation of the leaders themselves, and not through the legal abolition of the pluralist system.

It is also highly doubtful, as pointed out by Ellen Roy, if the parties are really indispensable.[62] They have not existed always. They were the products of incipient democracy when the people lacked proper political consciousness and when it appeared that the irreconcilable conflict between the interest of various classes must find expression in different political parties. By now, the conditions have altered. There is a greater political consciousness and the conflict of interests are no longer considered irreconcilable. Moreover, the existence of monarchs those days kept within limits the partisan spirit of the political parties, for they acted as super-party umpires between them. Their disappearance has only reinforced the faults of the party system and made a change of that system a dire necessity. What is needed today is the evolution of a better system with a more reasonable form and method of social change and adjustment. Political parties themselves are obstructing this evolution. The very idea that

they are indispensable is checking us from experimenting with and discovering a better political system.[63] The system, being fundamentally wrong, is beyond reform, and that is why Sarvodaya thinkers do not think in terms of reforming it.

A new way of politics has to be discovered. It should be able to provide people with more direct channels to express their will, to educate and enlighten them. A partyless democracy based on mature citizenry would not lead to chaos. People can well express themselves on public affairs through other political, economic and educational organizations. It is a mistake to think that unless parties are there, there would be as many voices as there are representatives. In every situation, alternatives are limited, and the representatives would automatically group themselves round those alternatives. There is no harm in it and these groupings can well change from issue to issue.[64] Of course all this would mean the abandonment of some present pet notions. It would not be possible to have one party cabinet with joint responsibility, and to maintain the convention that the cabinet must resign when its advice is not accepted by the parliament. It can function like a non-party cabinet.[65]

Thus the practical objections against non-party democracy are not insuperable, while to argue that parties are formed because men differ on socio-economic problems, is to forget that if differences are there, agreements are also there. It is for us to emphasize the one or the other. We have arrived at such a stage of development that to idealise the differences can only prove unfortunate. However, there is need to proceed cautiously, and to make people politically mature enough before full change is made. That is why the Sarvodaya thinkers do not insist on complete and immediate abolition of the party system, but suggest a cautions programme. Vinobaji emphasizes the need of a third group which would assume no political office, but which will influence all political parties. At the same time he desires the various political parties to cooperate in a common programme of all-round develop-

ment of the country.*[66] A convention should also be developed not to put up candidates against recognized political leaders, and the bye-elections should not be contested by any political party other than the one which won at the general election.[67] Jayaprakash Narayan for the time being advocates that elections to *panchayats* and other local bodies should not be contested by parties, a suggestion which has the support of U. N. Dhebar.[68] Some other suggestions are, and they involve no special risk, that the Election Commission should not officially recognize political parties, nor should the members be seated in the legislative chambers according to their political affiliations. Party whips should not be issued and non-acceptance of government proposals should not be taken as a 'no-confidence' in the cabinet. The government should agree to execute such proposition as the house decides.[69] The voters have even been advised to vote only for such candidates as are capable of proving efficient legislators, are free from partisanship and whose integrity is above suspicion. If no such candidate is available, it would be better not to vote at all.[70] It may be expected that such a step by the voters would compel parties to put up suitable and desirable candidates.

(*d*) *Indirect Elections or a System of Modified Direct Elections* : One of the main reasons why the party system is considered inevitable is the method of direct election in huge constituencies where the general body of voters is not acquainted with the candidates. But this method of direct election is highly defective because it is not conducive to a sound and healthy democracy. It is so expensive that moneyed interests or large sectional organizations like trade unions contributing to the party coffers come to exercise an undue influence on the policies of the parties. A poor independent candidate has no chance under the system, and then the whole process involves a huge waste

* If this suggestion that all parties should cooperate in a common national development programme is accepted, it might eventually result in the evolution of a partyless political system, different from that of the West.

of energy. Many good and capable men dislike to stand for these elections, and general calibre of the persons elected is not high.[71] Hence most of the present Sarvodaya thinkers favour like Gandhiji the substitution of direct elections by indirect elections except at the village level. Dada Dharmadhikari, however, differs on this issue from others and would prefer direct elections in the existing conditions,[72] and there is no doubt that the system of indirect election is open to some grave objections. First, it is liable to encourage parochialism and make the people and the lower organs of democracy feel that since they have had no hand in shaping the institutions at the State and Union levels, they bear no responsibility to them. Secondly, as the number of electors at each level, except the lowest, would be small, it would be easier for moneyed interests to corrupt them.[73] This realization has also compelled Jayaprakash Narayan to suggest such a modified system of direct election as would obviate its defects.

According to it, each *gram sabha* (Village assembly) in every constituency would select at a general meeting two delegates to an Electoral Council in the following manner. All the names proposed and seconded, if more than two, would be voted upon by show of hands, and votes received by each nominee entered against his name. The name of the person getting the least votes would be dropped, and the ballot held again for the remaining names. There would be repeated ballots, and the elimination of names one by one would continue till only two names are left for the Electoral Council. The next step would be for the Council to meet at a central place and set up candidates for election. Persons nominated by it and obtaining more than a given minimum of votes would be declared 'candidates', and then finally their names would be voted upon by the village assemblies. Hereafter two alternatives have been suggested. Either the person receiving the largest number of *gram sabha* votes is finally declared elected, or the candidate, who receives the largest number of the votes of the people voting at the *gram sabha* meetings all over the constituency is declared elected.[74] It is hoped that such a system of election would bind structurally the upper storeys of the

democratic edifice with the lowest, lending prestige, strength and meaning to the *gram sabha* and lifting it out of the possible morass of localism. It would further give a direct opportunity to every adult citizen to participate in choosing the highest organs of democracy.[75]

Thus Jayaprakash Narayan would modify the present direct election system to lessen its evils. The idea of Electoral Council is based on the Voters' Councils of Yugoslavia, which choose the candidates. It may, however, be said that Electoral Councils, constituted as they would be by small numbers of men, would provide some scope for horse-trading. This is true, but then it is not possible to devise any perfect procedure, and some risk has to be taken. Theoretically, the method of indirect elections may be said to hold the ground still, and though this method has been vehemently criticized for reasons admitted valid by Jayaprakashji himself, it has its support both in India and abroad.[76] Sarvodaya, as would be observed later on, stands for the utmost measure of political decentralization and autonomy to the lower units. If this comes to be realised, indirect elections would not entail appreciably the dangers envisaged by them.

The New Polity

The Sarvodaya thinkers propose to reconstruct the polity in accordance with their basic ideas. In that polity decentralization would replace the present centralization; instead of there being a welfare state, the people themselves would work for their own welfare, decisions would be arrived at not by the majority vote but by consensus of opinion, political parties would not exist and the system of present direct elections substituted either by indirect elections or by a modified form of direct election so as to obviate the defects of the present system. This polity would rely least on police and army, and as time passes, its coercive aspect would become less and less perceptible. The initiative would lie with the common people and the fate of the country would not be in the hands of a few individuals. However, with the solitary exception of Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, Sarvodaya thinkers do not describe

their polity in details, and he also simply gives a bare outline, discussing the underlying principles and indicating a general pattern of political organization.[77]

The proposed structure is pyramidal in form with the general village body constituted of every adult villager at its base. The villagers would elect an executive called 'panchayat' to run the village administration by consensus of opinion.[78] Its resolutions would have to be passed unanimously. The general body would have all the state powers, including regulation of village exports and imports. The village would arrange for its own education, medical service and judiciary.[79]

Several primary village communities would join in an integral regional community to tackle common problems and to promote common aims. Village *panchayats* would be integrated into regional *panchayats*; village cooperatives into regional cooperatives; primary schools into regional higher schools and so on. The regional body would not be a superior body to control and interfere in the internal administration of the primary communities, which, while enjoying delegated power, would be fully sovereign in their own regions. Regional communities would federate themselves into district communities, district communities into provincial communities and provincial communities into a national community. The last would attend to such matters as defence, foreign relations, currency, regulation of imports and exports, and interprovincial coordination and legislation.[80]

Thus the political structure would rise storey by storey from the foundation. The members of the regional and district bodies would be elected indirectly, while those of provincial and national panchayats would be elected by the modified system of direct election described earlier.[81] The representatives would be elected as good 'Independents' and not on any party basis.[82]

Sri Jayaprakash Narayan would vest the executive authority at the primary level in the panchayat with power to delegate it to individual members or to small committees. At the regional level the *Panchayat Samiti* would be the

executive body and it would function through committees. The same would be at the district level. However, at the provincial and national levels, the respective legislatures would appoint committees as executive bodies, responsible to them. These committees would be small workable bodies with powers to co-opt experts. Each committee would have a chairman and a secretary, and to coordinate the work of different committees, there would be a co-ordinating committee with one representative from each committee. Its decisions would be binding on all committees. As such, there would be no ministers, chief-ministers and the prime minister.[83]

The presidents of different communal bodies would have no administrative functions. However, if the democratic apparatus breaks down, they would have extra-ordinary emergency powers at their levels. The president of the National Assembly would also be the Supreme Commander of the armed forces and responsible to the *Sabha* (Assembly) for national defence. He would be assisted by a defence committee, of which he would be the chairman.[84]

The legislative powers would belong to the panchayat or the *Sabha* at its level. It would have the power to lay down rules or laws for the management of its internal affairs provided they do not conflict with the interests of other committees at the same level and with the rules and laws laid down by communities or *Sabhas* at the higher levels. In the work of administration, the committees would be assisted by paid civil servants, appointed at each level by the corresponding authority created for the purpose by the representative body concerned and on terms laid down by the latter. It would be the sovereign right of these communities to appoint and dismiss them.[85]

Sri Jayaprakash Narayan, however, has not indicated what departments of administration are to be entrusted to these various communities. He only says that police, justice, taxation, collection, social service and planning, should all be decentralized to the maximum extent

possible.*[86] In the beginning the top will have to take courage to hand over maximum powers to the communities, but as the people get trained and acquire self-confidence, the process of decentralization would become normalized and begin to operate from below. It is not envisaged that the whole structure would come into existence all at once. The foundation will have to be laid and then the structure built from below stage by stage.[87]

The above scheme of Sri Jayaprakash Narayan aroused a great deal of interest and evoked all sorts of opinion ranging from general approval to strong disapproval.

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* Sri S. N. Agarwal accords the following functions to the panchayats at various levels in 'Gandhian Constitution for India' :

The jurisidiction of village panchayats would include education, recreation, protection against theives, wild animals etc., industries (Cooperative dairy and village tannery), trade and commerce (marketing of products-cooperative consumer society), sanitation and medical relief, justice, finance and taxation. (pp. 81–84)

The Taluqa or Regional panchayats would guide, supervise and coordinate the activities of the village panchayats, maintain hospitals and maternity homes, arrange for secondary education, run the Taluqa Cooperative Banks and marketing societies, maintain model farms, etc. (pp. 85–86)

The District Panchayats would have somewhat similar functions. (pp. 86–87)

The Provincial Panchayat would guide and supervise the activities of Taluqa Panchayats, get their accounts audited, organise and own provincial transport and communication, arrange for university education, technical training and research, organise provincial relief, run a provincial Cooperative Bank, develop natural resources of the province and manage key industries. (pp. 88–89)

The Central Panchayat would be entrusted with defence, maintenance of a national force for internal law and order in emergencies, coordination of the provincial plans for economic development, running of key industries of all-India importance, managing all-India transport and communication, regulation of currency, customs and internal trade, maintenance of educational institutions of all-India importance, advising provinces regarding uniformity of educational standards and with foreign policy. (p. 94)

Prof. Gurmukh Nihal Singh gave an expression to the general opinion about this polity in his Inaugural Address to the 1959 Indian Political Science Conference. He appreciated the spirit behind it since it aimed at making democracy more than mere ability to choose and dismiss a government and to discover ways and means by which more and more people can govern themselves more and more. He admitted the defects of parliamentary government, political parties, direct elections and the majority system, and of the present tendency towards centralization and bureaucratization, and yet he was of opinion that the existing system is on the whole the best, and it can be further reformed substantially.[88]

The proposed polity has been criticized on several grounds. First, the very fundamental ideas of decentralization is questioned. It is argued that it would result in chaos if pursued to its logical limits.[89] Secondly, even if there is a strong case for decentralization, it is doubtful if it would be possible to have such a society, when the whole trend is against it. Moreover, the very existence of defence organization would lead to centralization.[90] Thirdly, such a polity would bear the seed of communist and fascist tryanny and would be detrimental to human freedom.[91] Fourthly, government by committees might be workable at lower levels, but it would weaken administration at the national level.[92] Fifthly, since political parties would cease to function, the mind of the masses would remain uneducated in the affairs of the world. All the more so, because they would be kept aloof from outside contact in their self-sufficient local communities.[93] Sixthly, the polity forgets the real condition of Indian villages, which are torn by mutual distrust, suspicion, caste and class conflicts. They would make unanimous election to village panchayats and decisions by consensus of opinion impossible. The latter may even result in the nullification of all progressive legislation and in tyranny.[94] Lastly, this polity is based on the belief that participation in government means being free. But all men are not interested in participating in ruling themselves. Some may even chafe under a participating democracy.[95]

The objections to the absence of political parties and consensus of opinion have already been dealt with. Others only have to be examined. Decentralization, as advocated by Sarvodaya, does not mean chaos. It takes fully into consideration the needs of modern times, and it is this necessity which made Gandhiji and other Sarvodaya thinkers attach the greatest possible importance to decentralization. The present trend towards increasing centralization is fraught with dangers both in the national and international spheres. In the former, it is likely to lead to totalitarian tyranny because the people are deprived of capacity to resist men in authority. Centralization means participation in the work of government by only a small number of people, and this results at first in irresponsible criticism of those in authority and later on in apathy and indifference towards politics itself. The whole system fails to create proper political consciousness. Hence the need of political decentralization to make citizens realise that they are arbiters of their own fate and a great responsibility lies on them. Internationally, the consequence of centralization is still more unfortunate. The fate of the world has come to hang in the balance upon the decisions of a few, who are burdened with too much responsibility. This is very dangerous and it must change. Thus decentralization is the prime need of the hour. It would reduce the burden on the few and induce a habit of thinking and a sense of responsibility in the multitude. Let us have it to the utmost extent possible.

Decentralization in the present age should not lead to the narrowing of vision and sympathies. We have got ample scientific inventions at our disposal to keep the masses enlightened and conversant with the world situation, and to make them realise their duty towards the world. Sarvodaya favours full use of them. Sarvodaya thinkers with their broad world outlook do not themselves relish exclusiveness. They aspire and attempt for greater unities, including world unity. Vinobaji thinks in terms of the 'universal man'.[96]

The fear that this polity bears the seed of fascist and communist tyranny, though not without foundation, is

unjustified. This impression is due to the fact that in recent times democracies have been supplanted by either personal or military rules in several Asian countries, and the new wielders of power swear by basic democracy. Moreover, the praise once lavished on the Pakistan experiment of Basic Democracy by Sri Jayaprakash Narayan had only strengthened this fear. But such a view would not be correct. A later statement of Jayaprakashji that he told King Mahendra of Nepal that a democratic experiment could only succeed under democratic conditions, and the 'royal turn-over' must transform itself into 'royal give-over' makes his position explicit.[97] Secondly, the conception put forward by Gen. Ayub and others only confirms the truth of the old saying that even vice has to take to the garb of virtue to hide its real nature. It cannot mean any condemnation of the virtue itself.

The argument against government by committees, even if correct, does not mean the rejection of the whole polity. It may well be given up, and even other suitable and desirable modifications may be made. It is true that the existing village conditions do not seem to suit the new polity, but then it is the very purpose of that polity to remove the present discord from the villages and to make them united. This can be achieved by gradual efforts in the direction of the new polity. Lastly, even if there are people who are not interested in ruling themselves, opportunities for it have to be provided to keep them politically conscious of their rights and duties. There is no compulsion in the new polity that all must participate in the work of government, even if they lack interest.

However, all these criticisms point to possible dangers, and they must be heeded as warnings. Still it seems, on the whole, that these objections are largely a product of innate human conservatism and the dread of the unknown. New experiments have to be made even if they involve some risk. The rapidity with which the world outside is changing demands an equal adaptability on our part if we are to avoid a calamity. We must be prepared for a reorientation of our ways of thinking and of our whole

social and political system. An additional plea in favour of political decentralization is that it would restore back to the communities rights which once belonged to them. It is as much a fundamental right of the communities to govern themselves as of a Nation-State. From a democratic standpoint, the Nation-State ought to have functions delegated to it by the community and not vice versa.[98]

Crime and Punishment in Sarvodaya Society

One of the oldest primary functions of the state is the prevention of crimes and the punishment of offenders, and with respect to these the coercive nature of the state is very apparent. Hence a free society must adopt some other methods of preventing crimes and disorders than the police. According to Vinobaji, in an ideal non-violent political order, there would be no police, but only a band of public-spirited workers, who by their service and contact with the neighbours would eliminate all causes of internal disturbances.[99]

In the society of Sarvodaya conception, occasions for crimes and internal disorders would be decidedly much less. Many of our present day crimes are offences against property. Their motives lie in starvation and poverty of the people, the desire for ever higher standard of living and in the tendency to grow rich without having to work. In other words, they are a result of the wrong economic structure of society and the wrong social values which give importance to the possession of wealth. A society based on the principles of 'non-possession' and 'bread-labour', wherein there do not exist great economic disparities and society itself provides ample social security to all, would not give rise to motives for such crimes. A few individuals who still persisted in them would need psychotherapy rather than the punishment of the present type. In the communitarian democracy described above the intimacy of social life with close acquaintance among the people woluld exercise a restraining effect on the crimes of all varieties.

The second type of crimes is against persons. They are born of either property dispute or vengeance or some

sudden emotional impulse or sexual or sadistic desires. The crimes of the first variety are likely to disappear in the new society which would not provide scope for property dispute. It would not be proper to regard those who commit crimes out of vengeance as the enemies of society in general and to punish them as such, since it does not mean that they would repeat the crime against other persons. Moreover, with better inculcation of love and forgiveness in society, the number of such crimes must also dwindle. The other varieties of crimes are indicative of a diseased mind and should be treated as such. It is to be realised that the prevailing barbarous and humiliating punishments tend to harden the culprits, and hence, instead of alleviating the disease, they only aggravate them.[100] Capital punishment, which, besides, being inhuman, deprives a culprit of any opportunity to reform himself, is to be looked upon with complete disfavour.[101] Serious and habitual offenders may be put in the society of high-souled persons or in any other suitable environment, and this would exercise a purifying and reforming effect on them.[102]

The existing system of punishment is largely based on the principle of deterrence, though the elements of retribution and reform are not totally absent. Retribution can have no place in Sarvodaya, even if it be in the form of social satisfaction at the punishment of the evil-doer. The principle of deterrence too cannot be acceptable to Sarvodaya if the object is to set an example to others, for that would be treating a person to be a means rather than as an end. If the object is to deter a habitual offender, it might be better done in a humane manner, so that he might be reformed. Thus it is only the principle of reformation which can be fully approved by Sarvodaya.

The Sarvodaya thinkers do not tell us anything about the organisation of the judiciary except that village panchayats would exercise judicial functions.[103] However, since they can only try village civil disputes and petty criminal offences, it may be held that some higher judicial organisations would also be needed, though as crimes

lessen, their work is bound to decrease. It is obvious that in Sarvodaya society, notions regarding crime and punishment, criminal law and procedure, would be radically modified.

International Organisation and World Peace

Another important function of the state is defence against external attacks, and from time immemorial it has involved the use of violence. Hence the vision of a non-violent society would remain an empty dream unless there be, in the first instance, permanent peace in the world, and, secondly, some non-violent method of meeting external aggression, if it occurs. The Sarvodaya thinkers attempt to solve both of these problems.

The problem of world peace has both a negative and a positive aspect. Negatively it involves eradication of war. On its positive side, peace is no mere cessation of war. Science has made the world ' one ', and peace in this context denotes an era of positive goodwill and cooperation among all the countries of the world, so that the whole human race may enjoy a fuller and richer life, and derive full advantage from modern science. This implies an international organisation and machinery to aid the people in the task of mutual cooperation and development. However, any such external machinery can only succeed if it is organised in response to psychological and social will to peace.

It is necessary for world peace to realise that war is intimately connected with the ways of our individual and social life, and is a result of violence that we find therein. Hence to abolish war, we must get rid of our anger, hate, passion, pride, cupidity, fear, egotism and inordinate ambition and lust for power. We must so reorganise our economic structure as to eliminate exploitation of man by man, and of one people by another people. There should surely be increase in production, but it must be accompanied by increase in love and sympathy as well.[105]

Another obstacle in the way of world peace is the lack of realisation that peace should be sought as a thing of

value in itself. The present desire for peace is either born of the danger of a nuclear war or of a desire to get time to build the national economy of one's country. Such fear or selfishness cannot result in any real lasting peace. Only when it is realised that peace has an independent value and should be sought after for its own sake, can nations be expected to outlaw war altogether. At present it is being maintained in the 'reserve' to be used when need arises. This acts as an impediment in the way of forging other suitable alternatives to solve international disputes.[106] In the context of the world situation which has prevailed during the last fifteen years, Sarvodaya thinkers have been advising that peaceful nations should keep aloof from power blocs, incur no further expenditure on armaments and use the army for ordinary construction work in peace time.[107] However, this alone has not been considered sufficient, and a wish has been further expressed that some nation must show courage to give up arms altogether and disband its army so that an example be set before others. It is necessary even if it involves martyrdom. Many individuals have to undergo martyrdom to establish morality in individual and social life. The same law applies to nations, for they are the 'individuals' in world community.[108]

It needs real international-mindedness to do so, but it has not been found so far in any people. Narrow nationalism of the western variety has no place in Sarvodaya which stands for equality and brotherhood of all peoples, irrespective of their colour, creed or country. It advocates an international thinking which, when occasion arises, would even expand itself into inter-spatial thought.[109] The world situation with its alternative of 'love or perish' seems to be propitious for it. It is in this context that Vinoba has adopted 'Jai Jagat' (Victory to the World) as his mode of salutation.

In the international society of Sarvodaya conception, artificial walls between countries would disappear. People would be free to pay visits to other countries, to go there for study, or to trade there as if they were the citi-

zens of that very country.[110] However, it does not mean that love for and service of one's own country should be looked down upon. After all, the whole problem of citizenship is the problem of right ordering of loyalties. What is needed is a broad perspective. The actual field for service for most people must ever remain a narrow one. There is no contradiction between the service of one's neighbours and the devotion to whole human society. As Shriman Narayan says, " Internationalism and universalism are states of mind and not creation of time and distance. One can follow villagism and universalism simultaneously. "[111] Only care is to be taken that the service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature. Vinobaji's slogan of ' Jai Jagat ' (Victory to the World) does not forbid ' Jai Hind ' (Victory to India) but includes it. [112] Hence what is expected is that a non-violent nation would have the same regard for the legitimate interests of other nations as for its own. It would not look with greedy eyes upon others, but assist them in a friendly manner and resolve its differences with others through arbitration.[113]

The internationalism of Sarvodaya is not 'internationalism ' in the usually accepted sense. What the world has been advocating so far has been only a sort of adjustment between different nations. Sarvodaya, on the other hand, preaches the Religion of Man, which considers man to be primarily a human being and not a resident of a particular country. To use a phrase of Vinobaji again, he is a ' universal man '.*

Sarvodaya thinkers advocate a world government. But Vinobaji's conception of a world govenmernt is very different from the various plans advocated by western thinkers from time to time. They have been thinking of a world state with a capital from which the whole world would be governed. Their world government is simply a larger edition of what a national government is today, with authority and means to bring any recalcitrant member to the right path. Not so with Vinobaji. His ' World

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* Vinobaji has borrowed this phrase from Rabindra Nath Tagore.

State' would have no police or military. It would command maximum moral authority and minimum physical power. It would be composed of sages, well-versed in ethics and beyond attachment and repulsion. They would meet at a central place, but their decisions would be in the nature of advice to be accepted by others with suitable modifications to suit particular conditions of a country. The sanction behind their advice would not be of coercion, but of the respect these persons would command due to their moral pre-eminence. A tribunal of similar persons with like authority would also be constituted to settle disputes between various countries.[114] Vinobaji is sure that a World Panchayat would come into existence, and then the two important institutions would be the Village Panchayat at the one end and the World Panchayat on the other. Provinces and nations would gradually lose their importance.[115]* He is critical of the United Nations Organisation because it lacks universality, is based on the principle of power and does not taboo the use of armed forces to solve international disputes.[116] His prescription for world unity comprises of a free give and take of ideas, exchange of non-essential articles as gifts, help to a country in distress and adjudication of disputes by a tribunal.[117]

National Defence and Peace Brigade

World peace is still a dream and there is enough tension in the world to make countries worry about their national defence. The result is that while nations talk of disarmament and meet at conference tables to solve that problem, distrust continues and armaments pile up. The situation is tragic indeed. While it is being realised by men like

* J. B. Kripalani has advocated a world parliament to be elected by the national parliaments of various countries. No nation, however big, is to have more than a maximum number of representatives, which he would like to fix at twenty or twenty-five. The smallest country would have at least one representative. Membership would be universal and no country would enjoy the veto. (*Gandhian Outlook and Technique*, p. 242-43).

Capt. B. H. Liddel Hart, a well-known authority on military science, that "war is a lunacy in the Hydrogen bomb age and any form of defence likely to result in a nuclear war is merely rextravagant non-sense", and that on practical grounds there is a stronger case for non-violent defence than is generally realized, it is yet doubted if any nation can be persuaded to embark on any such revolutionary experiment and if in view of human nature, non-violence can be effectively practised.[118] However, a person like Commander Stephen King-Hall, belonging to a family which for generations has supplied high naval officers to Great Britain, advocates non-violent defence in his book 'Defence in a Nuclear Age'. He objects to the very maintenance of army these days on practical grounds. He argues that the amounts spent on the army are so huge that most nations are badly handicapped in the task of ameliorating the condition of their peoples. This is bound to give rise to discontent and to imperil democracy itself in two ways. First, too great a stress on armament would lead to economic ruin, which in turn would bring about the collapse of free institutions. Secondly, it might lead to such a transformation of these institutions that they would cease to express the democratic way of life.[119] All this is true and in addition to the danger that piling up of armaments itself creates a very explosive situation, for, as the saying goes, 'guns go off of their own volition'.

It has to be realised that the existence of armed forces is no real solution of the problem of national defence. An army is a product of fear, and is incapable of inducing fearlessness. A nation to become really strong must be free of internal conflicts, self-sufficient in the primary needs of life and its people united by bonds of love. Hence what really matters is the morale and unity of the people, a readiness on their part to undergo all sufferings and sacrifices to maintain their independence and way of life. Vinobaji believes that a big country with couarge to disband its army totally will command so much of world's moral support that no country would dare commit aggression against her for fear of a world war.[120]

But such courage and confidence in non-violence can only develop gradually, and that too only when it has been demonstrated that police and army are not needed for internal disorders. This can be done if people form peace brigades to maintain internal peace, and the government accepts a self-denying ordinance not to use police and army to subdue internal disorders. Once the non-violent technique of dealing with such internal troubles has been developed, it would be possible to evolve, as the next step, the method of non-violent defence against a possible external aggression. Success of non-violence in the domestic field would also inspire in the people needed confidence in its efficacy.[121]

The initiative for the formation of peace brigades lies with the people and their importance cannot be over-emphasized. Without it non-violence would remain incomplete and crippled. It was Gandhiji himself who first of all suggested their formation as a remedy for communal riots and mob frenzy, and he died as a peace soldier. Vinobaji advocates them with the fourfold object of the propagation of Sarvodaya thought, service of the people, maintenance of internal peace and resisting an external aggression.[122]* These peace brigades differ from the conventional army in several respects. A conventional soldier has to be ready to die, but his function is to kill; a peace soldier has only to die, and that too without any illwill or hatred. Hence he does not need training in arms, but in the performance of constructive work and social service. The conventional army to be efficient has to be centrally organised and its generals remain in the rear to command and to direct the strategy. With peace

* The idae of Peace Brigades for international purpose had been supported by Salvador de Madariaga. A joint statement of de Madariaga and Jayaprakash Narayan suggested that there should be an unarmed international police of parachutists. The charter should ensure their inviolability, right to go anywhere and at any time, when once given an assignment by the U. N., and the right to interfere in any conflict of any nature.

(Bhoodan, 30. 7. 1960, p. 118)

brigades it is different. Their organisation is decentralized and their generals are in the vanguard to guide and command. An army is expected to be more effective in dealing with foreigners, while peace brigades work better among people they know well and to whom they have rendered various services in the past. There is no secrecy to be maintained in the peace brigades, and regimentation of thought or the conditioning of mind is discouraged. Study circles have to be organised for their members to develop in them a habit of independent thinking and to keep them well-informed. Their discipline is to be of a better quality than that of the conventional soldiers, because it is not to be imposed from outside and created by regimentation of life and thought, but generated from within.[123]

Naturally then, a much higher qualification is required of a peace soldier than mere physical fitness. He must have faith in the building up of a society based on truth and non-violence, in the fundamental unity of mankind and in the capability of non-violence to resolve all conflicts. He is required to take a pledge to work for peace at all costs, to rise above caste, communal, colour and party considerations, not to participate in war, to perform regularly some service to his fellow human beings and to observe the discipline of the peace army.[124] He has to work both for peace and social revolution, and this he would do by being fully active during peace time in tackling the roots of violence in social, economic, educational and administrative spheres, and by trying to meet critical situations non-violently in his own locality. He would not quietly wait for any conflagration to break out, but would try from day to day to create such conditions that conflict would not occur at all.[125]

These are normal peace time duties of a peace soldier and no exception can be taken to them. But a ticklish question arises when a country is faced by some wanton foreign aggression. One suggestion is that in case of such a contingency, the peace soldiers should resist the invaders non-violently and non-cooperate with them completely, maintaining at the same time an attitude of human

understanding towards the invading soldiers. It can be hoped that such resistance would not only wear out foreign invaders, but would further convince them of their mistake.[126]

This suggestion is fully in consonance with the Sarvodaya approach, but the problem is not so simple. It is perfectly right if the country invaded has been converted to non-violence, but the present condition is that only a microscopic minority of the peoples have faith in non-violent defence, and all the countries of the world maintain armies and rely on them for their defence. What are the few peace soldiers to do then ? The present Sarvodaya thinkers and workers have done serious thinking on the question in the context of Chinese aggression on India. Many junior thinkers and workers have been of the view that they should go to the front, stand between the opposing forces and allow themselves to be shot if need arises. Such martyrdom would have an effect on the whole world.[127] Kaka Kalelkar, on the other hand, has been of view that as long as there is no proper peace brigade, it is the duty of the government to defend the country with the aid of the armed forces and it should not be opposed. It would be cowardice to refuse to join the army when we pay taxes to and derive all advantages from the government, which maintains an army. However, while joining the army, a votary of non-violence should make it clear that he is prepared to die but not to kill anybody. Such man can either be sent in the van of the army without arms or made to do such other perilous tasks as do not involve the killing of any. By doing so, it would be possible to propagate non-violence and to discover some day the method of non-violent resistance through the government.[128]

The proposal of the young workers did not find favour with most of the senior Sarvodaya leaders. Dhirendra Mazumdar did not feel that such a course would advance the cause of non-violence. It might possibly have even an adverse reaction.[129] Some other leaders too felt it to be unpracticable in the conditions of today.[130] As regards

Vinobaji, while he could not reject in toto the idea of peace soldiers going to the war front, he did not, first of all, deem it practicable, and, secondly, he did not think that any such 'crude' form of satyagraha can work successfully in the international field. His practical objection was that there were not enough of peace soldiers to constitute a division so that it could be demanded of the government to allot to them some specific front for their exclusive action. And, moreover, they had not been able to build up any sanction to make such demand acceptable to the government.[131] However, it seems that the question has not been closed yet and the final word has not been pronounced.[132]

The suggestion of Kaka Kalelkar, no doubt, has the merit that it would convince people of the sincerity of the votaries of non-violence, but its great disadvantage is that it would make them 'participators' in war and thus would eclipse the demonstration of the power of non-violence. It has also not appealed to other Sarvodaya leaders in spite of the fact that Kakaji can find support in some of the actions and utterances of Gandhiji. In the present conditions of the country when people lack faith in non-violence and because of the fact that they sincerely and honestly deem China to have been the aggressor, they would not surely oppose the war efforts of the government, but there is no suggestion from them for believers in non-violence to join the army, even if it be under the conditions laid down by Kakaji.[133] Their stress is on building up the morale of the people, especially in the border areas, on preparing them for non-violent resistance to the invaders if need arises, on forging greater unity in the country through *gramdan* and other activities, and on encouraging greater production in the country and self-sufficiency in the villages.[134] All this is expected to increase the capacity of the country for non-violent defence and at the same time to take the country onward on the path of internal non-violent revolution.

The attitude of the Sarvodaya leaders not to oppose the war efforts of the Government of India has created

keen disappointment among western pacifists, to whom all wars, irrespective of their nature, whether offensive or defensive, are unmitigated evils and there can be no compromise with them. In their intense disappointment they have even characterised the peace army and the Sarva Seva Sangh, the body which guides the Sarvodaya movement, as the non-violent department of the government. They feel that the Sarvodaya leaders look to the government for guidence, are not prepared to take upon themselves the consequences of a policy of resistance to war efforts, and have not been able to rise above feelings of nationalism. They are afraid that this would pave way for the rise of a spirit of militarism in the country.[135] Vinobaji's reply to all this amounts to saying that while he respects these pacifists for their uncompromising attitude towards war, he would not like to become dogmatic and he would plead with them not to be so but to use discernment and examine the case on its merits. His whole thinking is opposed to war, but the fact that this war was imposed on India and the policy of the government has never been anti-Chinese, has compelled him to use discernment and not to oppose the war efforts of the government.[136] It seems to me that the atittude of the Sarvodaya leaders is correct both from theoretical and practical points of view. While the observance of non-violence by an individual is his duty, resistance cannot be deemed so in all situations and circumstances. It is always a matter of policy to be decided according to the circumstances and merits of the case. The Sarvodaya leaders have neither advised their followers to join the army nor to help in any other way in the war efforts of the government. Had they done so, they could have been validly charged with the violation of the principle of non-violence. They have simply not opposed the war efforts of the government and this alone cannot constitute a breach of non-violence. And then they are in their own ways doing their best to develop the strength of non-violence in the people. They are also always urging on the government to adopt a peace-loving and reasonable attitude towards the settlement of the Indo-Chinese border question. They

have to a great extent neutralised the bellicose voices that are sometimes heard in the public, and of which the Delhi-Peking Peace marchers have had enough of experience. Any individual, who is familiar with conditions in India, knows how essential it was to strengthen the hands of Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was a sincere believer in peaceful co-existence, against militant nationalism which had been trying to raise its head during the days of peril. Any other approach on the part of Sarvodaya leaders would have probably resulted in helping the very growth of the spirit of militarism which is so much dreaded by the pacifists. The attitude of the Government of India towards the peace marchers stands in sharp contrast to that of the Peking government which refused them permission to enter the Chinese territory, and is a proof of the intention of the Indian Government to do everything possible to reduce tension. But all this does not mean that believers in Sarvodaya need not be alert and vigilant. The dividing line between non-opposition and cooperation is very thin and there is a danger of slip from the former into the latter. I am afraid that in Asian countries chauvinistic nationalism is growing and this danger cannot be ruled out here in India as well. Hence there is need to stand on guard and to oppose such policies of the government as are likely to result in militarism. However, this whole controversy reminds one of the long correspondence between Gandhiji and some western pacifists that took place in the twenties because of their differing attitude towards war. The chief result of it probably was a better appreciation of each other's point of view. I hope that this difference of approa ch between Sarvodaya leaders and western pacifists would lead to a better understanding between the two and a synthesis of their ideas.

The position taken up by Vinobaji and other Sarvodaya leaders finds endorsement in the advice of Gandhiji tendered to a Chinese Christian who was a sort of pacifist and was placed in like circumstances due to the Japanese invasion of China. This individual advice given in 1939 can be taken to represent his final view as against those earlier utterances and actions of his which favour the views

of Kaka Kalelkar. Gandhiji had participated in humanitarian services during the Zulu and Boer wars in South Africa and had cooperated in war efforts during the First World War in India, but he said to the Chinese gentleman, "My example cannot be used as a precedent for others to follow." And he further remarked, "The lesson to be learnt from it by you is that, placed as you are in a position of hopeless minority, you may not ask your people to lay down *their arms unless their hearts* are changed and by laying down their arms they feel the more courageous and brave. But while you may not try to wean people from war, you will in your person live non-violence in all its completeness and refuse all participation in war. You will develop love for the Japanese in your hearts......At the same time you will not pray for the success of Chinese arms. It is very difficult to judge, when both sides are employing weapons of violence, which side 'deserves' to succeed. You will, *therefore*, pray only that the right should prevail. Whilst you will keep yourself aloof from all violence, you will not shirk danger. You will serve friend and foe alike with a reckless disregard for your life. You will rush forth if there is an outbreak of an epidemic or a fire to be combated, and distinguish yourself by your surpassing courage and non-violent heroism."[137] The attitude of Vinobaji and others, I submit, is in accord with the above advice of Gandhiji.

Appraisal

The ideas of the present Sarvodaya thinkers on the political structure have already been examined at length. However, a few remarks may still be made.

Concerned as these thinkers are with the problems of Indian reconstruction, they have done some systematic thinking on the question of political systems and institutions. They share with Gandhiji his ideal of anarchism, his dissatisfaction with the prevailing form of democracy, his preference for indirect elections and his dislike of political parties. But in their emphasis on decisions by unanimity or consensus of opinion, and in their advocacy of partyless democracy, they go *farther than* Gandhiji.

No doubt, Gandhiji did not favour the imposing of majority decision on respectable minority. He once wrote, " Numerical strength savours of violence when it acts in total disregard of any strongly felt opinion of a minority. The rule of the majority is perfectly sound, only when there is no rigid insistence on the part of dissenters upon their dissent, and when there is on their behalf a sportsmanlike obedience to the opinion of the majority. "[138] But then he also said, " Where there is no principle involved and there is a programme to be carried out the minority has got to follow the majority. "[139] The present Sarvodaya thinkers would also agree with this, and it is, I am sure, present in their mind, butI do not find any clear expression of it. It is as necessary to emphasize it as the first. Moreover, besides theoretical exposition, Gandhiji does not seem to have insisted upon it in the working of any institution. Sarvodaya thinkers have made it a working rule of their institutions and advise its application elsewhere.

With all his dislike of the working of political parties, I have found Gandhiji nowhere expressing himself in favour of partyless democracy. The present thinkers do so with their experience of the effect of party politics on this country. However, there is nothing in it which might be regarded inconsistant with the ideas of Gandhiji.

Similarly, in rejecting the welfare state for welfare society they seem to break new ground, but in doing so they corroborate Gandhiji's view that a state is perfect and non-violent if it governs the least.[140] They also stand for a communitarian form of polity after the manner of Gandhiji, but they have gone into its details for which he did not feel the need. To Jayaprakash Narayan goes the chief credit of describing the outlines of such a polity. Some might wish that his polity had been more detailed, but Jayaprakashji did well not to do so for that would have only aroused unnecessary controversies, side-tracking the attention from the main issues involved in that polity.

The present Sarvodaya views on crime and punishment are also similar to those of Gandhiji.[141] The conception of peace brigades has found greater amplification at the

hands of these thinkers, specially Vinobaji. They have extended the scope of their functions, laid down qualifications for their members and the type of training necessary for them.* Their conceptions of world peace and World Government are novel, but clear and consistent with the whole trend of Sarvodaya thought. Like Gandhiji, they lay stress on unilateral disarmament and express faith in non-violence for national defence. But since such faith has yet to grow in the public, they suggest concrete steps that can lead society to it. Meanwhile, their attitude towards a wanton foreign aggression is in accordance with the advice of Gandhiji. Since the believers in non-violence are very few and the country is yet to be converted to non-violence, they would not oppose the armed measures taken by the government, and yet at the same time they would do nothing which might be interpreted as cooperation with violence.

In short, their ideas on the political structure, national or international, and national defence are largely an amplification of the ideas of Gandhiji and their application to the present-day situation. In doing so, they display an originality and resourcefulness, for many of the problems of today had not actually arisen during the days of Gandhiji, and he left no ready-made solutions for all possible contingencies. The science and art of non-violence is still in evolution, and the present-day Sarvodaya thinkers, most of whom had been very close to him, drinking deep at his fountain and imbibing his ideas, are contributing in its development. They display a realism harmonised with idealism for they are engaged in no theoretical but the practical task of giving a new direction to the social, economic and political trends in India, and through it to the world at large.

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* Since the permament work of peace soldiers lies in the domestic field of the country, their other qualifications and training have been dealt with in the next chapter under subsection 'Constructive Work'.

CHAPTER VIII

THE REALIZATION OF SARVODAYA

The two preceding chapters have dealt with the picture of Sarvodaya society as outlined by the present-day Sarvodaya thinkers; but the main problem is how to realise it when the world trend seems to be against it. It would not do to realise it anyhow. The technique must be in consonance with the objective itself, for as Gandhiji said, "As the means, so the end."[1] In the words of Richard B. Gregg, "Ends which are sought in human affairs are matters of growth, and inevitably absorb and embody the means which are used to produce them, just as a plant absorbs water, minerals and the energy of the sunshine which are means of its growth."[2] This is a principle which specially differentiates Sarvodaya from Communism. The latter attempts to establish a stateless society through an intensification of the state, and a peaceful society through hatred and class war. As against it, Sarvodaya would bring about a state-free society by developing in the people a capacity to do without the state as far as possible. It would breed such habits in people as are in harmony with the ethical principles it wants to see materialised in society. Its methods are constructive work including Nai Talim* (New or Basic Education), proper planning and satyagraha.

(A) CONSTRUCTIVE WORK

The Nature of Constructive Work

'Constructive Work' signifies a programme that would lead to the reconstruction of both men and society by correcting the faults of private and public life. It differs from what is generally termed as 'Social Service' in that its object is not only to give relief to the afflicted,

* Nai Talim has been treated here separately because of its great importance.

but to eliminate the very need of that relief by removing the causes that give rise to it. Another of its ingredients, according to the Sarvodaya thinkers, is that it is performed of one's own accord. It is purely a moral action which builds up morality in men. It is not acutated by any temptation or fear.[3] Itself an expression of non-violence, it further aids in its growth. Gandhiji regarded constructive work to be 'the fulfilment of Swaraj' and the present Sarvodaya thinkers attach to it no less importance—rather more, because in the days of Gandhiji, its significance had been eclipsed by non-cooperation and civil disobedience.

The Programme

Constructive work done during the time of Gandhiji did not quite fulfil his expectations. The constructive work institutions had failed to guide the enthusiasm of the people in 1942 into right channels and to provide an antidote to governmental repression. Hence he thought of reorienting it and made some suggestions for it after his release from detention in 1944. Some efforts were made to act upon them, but on the whole the work continued in the old manner.[4] However, with the advent of independence, the old programme completely lost its dynamic. The national government, wedded to the idea of the welfare state, began either to take upon itself or aid those activities in which the constructive workers were engaged. Thus the old type of work lost its revolutionary character and a feeling of helplessness and dependence on government set in the workers. But the rise of the Bhoodan (Land-gift) movement in 1951 provided the new dynamic until 1957 when popular enthusiasm for the movement subsided. This naturally led to a good deal of thinking among the Sarvodaya leaders and some of them began their search for new dynamic to impart momentum to the Sarvodaya movement, to consolidate the gains already achieved and to prepare for the next offensive. In all this their aptitudes, inclinations and previous experiences played their part. Shri Jayaprakash Narayan laid emphasis on making a success of the Panchayat Raj (Democratic Decentralization) System introduced in several states since

such success could result in further political decentralization, and on encouraging people's initiative in choosing candidates through voters' councils for the general election of 1962, an idea inspired by the example of Yugoslavia.[5] Those who had been engaged in the work of village industries drew up the *Naya Morh* (New Direction) programme which laid down that the work of Khadi and other village industries should henceforth be conducted taking the village unit as its basis and with the object of an all-round development of the village. Its aim was village or regional self-sufficiency. The whole village was to plan as a family for the fulfilment of its basic needs and for providing work to all.[6] Shri Dhirendra Mazumdar regarded all the above three activities to be valuable in that they helped in the preservation of the gains already achieved and in extracting as much of the revolution as was possible out of the existing institutions, but he was afraid that if too much importance was attached to them, there was the danger of the workers becoming mere camp followers of the government.[7] Hence with his long experience of village work, he applied himself to such village reconstruction work as relied completely on the villagers themselves and which was expected to take the village gradually through a process of education and training towards the establishment of 'gram swarajya' (village self-government). Vinobaji concurred with him in so far as he stood for such a constructive programme as others would not be able to carry out and for which they would look only to Sarvodaya. It could provide an instrument to spread Sarvodaya ideas. He was of opinion that village industries, Bhoodan and Basic Education provided useful opportunities to carry to the massses the whole concept of a non-violent society.[8] But his greatest insistence was on Bhoodan and Shanti-Sena (Peace Army) work. By Bhoodan work he meant intensive drive to secure land-gifts with simultaneous distribution and completion of the distribution of land secured previously. Shanti-Sena work primarily means preservation of internal peace in one's locality in the first instance and its restoration if violence breaks out. But it also includes *Sarvodaya patra*

work, social service, propagation of Sarvodaya ideas and Bhoodan activity.

This difference of emphasis did not have any adverse effect on the movement because, first, every type of activity mentioned above had its own recognized value, and, secondly, because it was acknowledged by all that the Bhoodan and Shanti-Sena activities were very important and possessed the potentiality of bringing about the desired revolution. Meanwhile, the alert and acute mind of Vinobaji himself had been busy discovering ways and means to bring life again in the old Bhoodan-Gramdan movement and other activities. At last he enunciated the idea of 'Easy or New Gramdan', a strategic retreat, no doubt, but one which is proving attractive and holds out a promise of infusing a new life into the Sarvodaya movement. The present position is that Sarvodaya activities are getting centred round three items of New Gramdan, Shanti-Sena and the Village-Oriented Khadi.* Individual

* The idea of the 'New Gramdan' is that any village or some recognised part of it is to be declared a gramdan village if at least 75 p. c. of the landholders owning at least 71 p. c. of the total land donate one-twentieth each of their lands to the Gram-Sabha (Village council) for the landless. They have also to agree to surrender their right of ownership over all their lands to the council on condition that they or their descendants would not be deprived of their remaining lands without their consent. They, however, would have the right to transfer it to the council itself or any member-family of the council with its (council's) permission. The tillers of the land have also to promise to donate each year one-fortieth of the net produce of their lands to the village-fund. Those who do not till lands have to donate one-thirtieth of their wages, pays' pensions or of the amount they draw from their business to spend over themselves.

The Shanti-Sena work is the same old work with an added emphasis on making the movement successful by opening peace centres, formation of young peace groups, proper suitable training, etc. The Village-Oriented Khadi looks not to the cities for its sale, but to the villagers for using the cloth manufactured in the villages. The government has stopped the rebate it had so far paid on the

leaders, however, continue to work in their own ways or participate in such activities as they think are helpful in the realization of Sarvodaya. Sri Dhirendra Mazumdar is still devoting himself to village work on the lines laid down tentatively by him in his booklet, 'Gram Bharati', and Shri Jayaprakash Narayan continues to take interest in the Panchayat Raj System. His main energy is, however, now concentrated on the New Gramdan movement.

Whatever difference of emphasis there might have been or still may be between these leader-thinkers regarding the type of constructive activity to be adopted, on other aspects of constructive work, namely, the qualifications, training and maintenance of workers, the form of organization, and attitude towards politics and government, there have been practically no differences among them.

The Worker

The success of any programme of work depends upon the personality of the worker. Hence the Sarvodaya thinkers lay much stress on the qualities of character and other qualifications that they consider necessary for him. He is advised to reflect such virtues in his own life as he wants to see materialised in society. In other words, he is asked to base his life on truth, love, non-possession and manual labour. In the context of the village, it should resemble that of a villager. In addition to having these qualities, he is also expected to be humble, courteous, persevering and patient, and have the ability both to work alone and in cooperation with others. He should himself be above all caste and party considerations, but he must not feel contempt for those who are not able to rise above them. The purer his life, the more effective he is likely to prove. He should be able to work without any ulterior motive for constructive work demands selfless spirit.[9]

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sale of Khadi, and now it meets the weaving charges. It is expected that villagers would take to spinning and exchange their yarn for cloth without much additional payment. (Bhoodan Yajna, 17.1.1964, pp. 5, 6-7 and 11).

All these items are intimately interconnected.

To enact a revolution in society, he must be a whole-time worker with a clear conception of Sarvodaya and an active faith in it combined with a discontent at existing conditions and an impatience to change them. He must have a requisite knowledge of all the village problems. He should be conversant with some craft, preferably agriculture, and should have some knowledge of common ailments and their treatment. He should also posses a good knowledge of culinary science and art.[10]

To have such workers, training institutions will be needed, for it is only after proper training that persons with noble ideals and desirous of serving society can become good workers. The Sarvodaya thinkers, however, only tell us about the training that would be needed for a Shanti-Sainik, but since every worker is expected to be a Shanti-Sainik, the same would apply to him. This training will have to be both theoretical and practical. The workers would need theoretical lectures on economics, political science and psychology, the science of non-violence and satyagraha and its history, the Indian national movement, the various experiments in non-violence in other parts of the world, the lives of great past and present world figures, schools of contemporary thought, causes of social tensions, national and international problems, etc. The workers have to be imparted a habit of systematic study and a widened outlook. They would need practical training in collective life, the art of properly running a kitchen, self-help, practical social service, etc.*[11]

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* The World Shanti-Sena Conference which met at Bairut from 27.12.1961 to 2.1.1962 applointed a Policy Group on Volunteers and Training. The report of the Group on the curriculum said :

While recognizing the need for flexibility in the development and administration of our various training programmes, the group nevertheless feels that the following aspects of experience ought to be included in the curriculum of all zonal training centres. It is the group's further hope that some of these aspects may also be individually explored by interested persons in their own local groups and agencies. (*i*) *The study of non-violence* : Reading of

As for the maintenance of the workers, the ideal is that they should maintain themselves on manual labour like other villagers. But there are practical difficulties in it. Only a few of the present middle class workers can do so, and even if they are capable of it, they are not likely to find time for it. Hence this method has generally to be ruled out for the present. Other alternatives are that a worker should either be maintained by the people or by some friend of his. Vinobaji approves both of them in the forms of *sampattidan* (donation of a part of annual income), *sutanjali* (donation of hand-spun yarn) and *sarvodaya-patra*.[12] Shri Shankerrao Deo does not like the idea of the maintenance of Shanti-Sainiks through *sarvodaya-patra* since it may give rise to a feeling in the worker that he is discharging an important function in society and it is the duty of

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the history, ideology, philosophy, economic and practice of non-violence throughout the world. (*ii*) *Simple Living* : Learning to live without luxury, to adjust to hardship and to provide for one's basic needs in emergency situations. (*iii*) *Service* : Work camps, care for the sick, the aged and poor, development of service skills (*i. e.* first aid, life saving, fire fighting, driving etc.). (*iv*) *Community responsibility* : (*a*) Practice in group decision, and regulation; (*b*) sharing and cooperation; (*c*) modes of creative expression (drama, singing etc.) (*v*) *Establishing contact and relationships*; (*a*) selecting a common language for use within the Shanti Sena; (*b*) study of individual and group psychology; (*c*) learning of the language, customs, religious and ethical values appropriate to particular project situations. (*vi*) *Field work in non-violence* : Experimentation with non-violent methods in situations of conflict as well as in situations of tension and injustice. (*vii*) *Discipline* : (*a*) physical-endurance, fasting etc.; (*b*) emotional non-attachment, acceptance of group decisions, patience, silence.

In general, the group felt that throughout the entire training programme emphasis should be placed on the development of spiritual attitudes and resources through meditation, concentration and education of the conscience. Time should be set aside for fostering spiritual growth as essential to the development of integrated peace volunteers. (Gandhi Marg, January 1962, p. 84)

society to maintain him.[13] Shri Dhirendra Mazumdar is prepared to give only a qualified approval to the maintenance of workers by *sampattidan* or other donations by individuals or public in general. He is opposed to their maintenance by some friend or friends because these friends are bound to be well-to-do people and he is doubtful if workers depending on them can bring about a revolution favourable to the down-trodden section of society.[14] The problem, no doubt, is greatly solved in his scheme of village work described in 'Gram Bharati', but in the present situation there does not seem to be any alternative to Vinobaji's suggestion.

Organization

An important question in connection with constructive work concerns the place and type of organiaztion necessary for it. The present-daygeneral tendency, whicq is towards centralization, accords great importance to organizations to control and guide the workers, and to coordinate their activities. The view of the Sarvodaya thinkers, however, is different. The theoretical position taken up by Vinobaji is completely against any organisation. He argues that non-violence needs no external machinery to propagate itself. What are required are self-purification, service of living beings, an all-embracing love and fearlessness.[15] That is why he is not a member of any organization and occupies no official position in the Sarvodaya movement. However, he does not maintain that extreme position in practice, and does not taboo every form of organization. He only disfavours the prevailing type of organizations which control workers, issue commands and take disciplinary action against the recalcitrants. He favours a small local organization of workers who are known to each other.[16] He would permit even a higher organization if it is voluntary and exercises only moral authority. It would only give advice, which the workers may accept or not. In all organizations decisions would be arrived at by consensus of opinion.[17] Thus what he permits is a kind of brotherhood. The organization of the Sarva Seva Sangh corresponds to his ideas.

The position taken up by K. G. Mashruwala and Dhirendra Mazumdar is slightly different from that of Vinobaji. They both regard some form of organization to be indispensable. But while the latter does not elaborate his ideas of organization, the former would advise a group of villages with ten to fifteen hundred souls or every city with its natural suburbs to form a unit. Every such unit should be served by a group of workers who should form subcommittees for each kind of work and for each sub-section of the unit. There is no need of any formal election, and it would do no harm even if they are self-appointed for the need of mutual cooperation would always be there.[18] In the case of Dhirendra Mazumdar it can well be presumed that he agrees with the practical position taken up by Vinobaji.

Constructive Work and Politics

A constructive worker, as already noted above, is advised by Vinobaji and most of other thinkers[19] to keep himself aloof from party politics or, in other words, from parliamentary politics. This advice is based on several grounds. First, it is held that no revolution can be brought about through the use of state authority. The real task is to build up public opinion and the power of the people. When this is achieved, the government itself would fall in line with that opinion. Thus what is rather needed is a third party, besides the party in power and the opposition, to keep the government on the right track.[20] Vinobaji says, "There must be a party in the country which would keep itself aloof from power. It would consist of people whose only concern and aim will be constant service of the people, service without any desire for reward, and who would always act up to certain moral standards. With this object in view it would always keep itself engaged in rendering selfless service to the people, remain in their constant touch and always tell them the truth. It is only thus that government and administration can be kept clear (clean)."[21] Secondly, it would not be beneficial to the Sarvodaya movement to have a parliamentary wing of its own, for then the whole policy of Sarvodaya would come to be affected by a strategy to capture power, and it

would cease to exercise a wholesome influence. It would be far more advantageous to have a body of people who do not aim at power at all or at securing the votes of the people, for then they would not have to compromise truth or public interest with any ulterior motive and they would always be able to point their fingers at the evils wherever they be. Only such people can really spiritualize politics by divorcing it from power and making it the hand-maid of service.[22] Lastly, times too do not seem propitious in India for any such participation. It takes a long time to build up sound political parties, and artificial attempts to bolster up opposition can only demoralise politics and encourage opportunism. What is rather needed at this juncture is the raising of the standard of public conduct.[23] Hence Sri Shankerrao Deo observes, "For a successful working of democracy, especially in a country like ours, a large number of persons of quality and integrity from the common stock is quite necessary. In fact, that is our main problem today, and the mere formation of new parties, and that too in the hope of the immediate capture of power, will not solve it. On the other hand, this type of remedy may prove to be worse than the disease itself."[24]

Acharya Kripalani, however, disagrees with other thinkers and argues that the tendency to shun politics is to run away from the 'snake' instead of wrestling with it. He thinks that exclusive attention to constructive work would make it a mere missionary work and yield meagre results. At the same time politics, left in the hands of power-seekers, would be further degraded.[25] He writes, "If the individual-in-society is to be moralised it can be done through politics and group action that conforms to the dictates of morality and conscience. Sure, power corrupts. But the risk has got to be taken."[26] His most forceful argument, however, is that a bad political set up is the greatest hindrance to advancement and progress and that a revoluion in order to spread and stabilise itself must control political power directly or indirectly.[27]

There is much practical wisdom in the arguments of both the camps. But theoretically speaking, Vinobaji's

school is on firmer grounds. The arguments of Acharya Kripalani are forceful only if the aim be to bring about a social transformation from above. If the object is, as it is, to develop the strength of the people, to reduce the need of the state and to bring about a real revolution by change in the values of life, things have to be built up from below, and then we must agree with Vinobaji and others who advise constructive workers to keep aloof from party and parliamentary politics. As far as practical policy is concerned, it is possible that a time may come when Sarvodaya may not find it possible to neglect parliamentary politics. But that occasion has not arisen yet. The primary task before Sarvodaya workers at present is to build up public opinion in favour of their ideas and to inspire people to transform their individual and social life on those lines. Such was also the advice which Gandhiji tendered to the constructive workers in December, 1947.[28] Today even the work of encouraging the people's initiative in choosing candidates for elections is full of peril lest it might draw Sarvodaya workers into the vortex of party politics. Only workers with a firm grasp of Sarvodaya ideas and full faith in them can do that work without endangering the whole basis of the Sarvodaya movement. However, all this does not mean that Sarvodaya thinkers are not interested in politics. They are surely concerned with 'fundamental' politics. That is why instead of tackling the representatives and the servants, they go with full faith to the masses, who are the 'masters'.

Constructive Work and Government

The above lack of faith in party or parliamentary politics does not imply any non-cooperation with the government. There can be cooperation with the government in such schemes as are conducive to the good of the people.[29] State aid can also be accepted for Sarvodaya work if the terms do not cripple that work or so influence the worker as to make him deviate from his path. It is to prevent this danger that Vinobaji's advice is to maintain the worker strictly on popular support and to work in a manner that the need for state aid may progressively dimi-

nish for other purposes.[30] He says, "If we succeed in maintaining our workers on the basis (support) of the friends or the people, we shall be able to generate some strength and also be in a position to non-cooperate with the government when required. Otherwise the biggest among us would be a slave of its money."[31] The workers have to be fully prepared for the indifference or even opposition of the government. Such has been the experience of the Sarvodaya work in the *gramdan* areas of Orissa, where reconstruction work had been started with help from the government.[32]

Appraisal

Gandhiji had laid much emphasis on constructive work and the present thinkers attach even greater importance to it in the context of the changed conditions after independence. It may, however, be said that they are still experimenting to discover such a programme of work as would create enthusiasm in the people and would lead society towards the realization of Sarvodaya. Shri R. K. Patil had remarked in 1961, "A valid criticism of the followers of Gandhiji can be that they have failed to discover such a dynamics and have acquiesced in the execution of a socalled constructive programme which is tied to the apron strings of a welfare state."[33] I feel that in the conditions of today this remark appears pre-mature. However, it appeared to be correct at the time it was written. Vinobaji had surely discovered a programme for himself, but it needed a personality like his own. The very fact that the moment his back had turned, the workers and people began to lose enthusiasm, demonstrated the need of such a programme as could be taken up by the average worker. The constructive programme, as it has emerged now, may fulfil that need.

With these observations apart, it must be admitted that the whole philosophy of constructive work has been consistently developed on the basis of the fundamental ideas of Sarvodaya, and there is nothing in it for which it may be validly criticized. There is also nothing inconsistent in it with the ideas of Gandhiji, whether it is in regard to

the importance of the work or in regard to the qualifications and training of the workers, or in regard to the attitude towards parliamentary politics or government. The advance that has been made over his ideas chiefly concern the place of organization in constructive work and the maintenance of the worker. The first indicates an extension of the principle of non-violence and the latter of the principle of non-possession. The two are also interdependent on each other. An organization free from the responsibility to maintain workers can only exercise moral authority over them, while workers depending on people or friends or on their own labour for their living can maintain their freedom from any undue control of the organization.

(B) NAI TALIM

Nai Talim and the Present Thinkers

Of all the items of the Gandhian Constructive Programme, the most important is Nai Talim,* or the New Education, which, in the words of Acharya Kripalani, is 'the coping stone of Gandhiji's socio-political edifice'.[34] Gandhiji had regarded his scheme of education as 'a spearhead of a silent social revolution' and expected it to provide a healthy and moral basis of relationship between the city and the village, and to go a long way in eradicating poisoned relationship between the classes.[35] This was confirmed by Zakir Husain Committee, which said, "Socially considered the introduction of such practical productive work in education, to be participated in by all the children of the nation, will tend to break down the existing barriers of prejudice between manual and intellectual workers, harmful alike to both."[36]

Such is the social significance of Nai Talim, but it does not entail any sacrifice of the individual goal of education

* Its fundamental principles, as already dealt with in the second chapter are two—all education be woven round a craft, and the produce of the craft be made economically remunerative to meet the recurring cost of education. (J. B. Kripalani : The Latest Fad, p. 11).

for its social goal. It was also Gandhiji who said, "By education I mean an all-round drawing out of the best in child and man—body, mind and spirit."[37] Nai Talim serves both the goals at the same time. To cite Zakir Husain Committee again, "Modern educational thought is practically unanimous in commending the idea of educating children through some suitable form of productive work. This method is considered to be the most effective approach to the problem of providing an 'integral' all-sided education."[38]

The idea of Nai Talim, first suggested for the education of children between seven to fourteen (called Basic Education), was later on extended to all the stages. Gandhiji had come to hold that 'it should include the education of every body at every stage of life' including the university stage.[39]

The present Sarvodaya thinkers accept the whole idea underlying Nai Talim including its social and individual aims.[40] Their attitude may be depicted in the words of Acharya Kripalanis who writes, "Gandhiji laid the foundation of a scheme of national education suited to our needs, requirements and genius and our aspirations for the future. It is for us to perfect it and extend it to cover the entire field of education. In this process adjustment and adaptation may be necessary. But these must be undertaken in the spirit of the total philosophy of Gandhiji for the individual and society."[41] This is what is being done now. It was realised after independence that to build up the new society, Nai Talim must not remain confined within the four walls of the school. The whole village must become a Nai Talim school, and then all the efficient artisans and cultivators of the village would become Nai Talim teachers and the villagers of all ages would become its students.[42] This implied that the new education besides concerning itself with regular education, must also take up adult or social education. And it is rather more important both from the point of view of bringing in the new society and of creating a proper atmosphere for Nai Talim itself. Hence the present Sarvodaya thinkers deal with both adult

or social education and the regular education in their ideas on Nai Talim.

Adult or Social Education

Nai Talim in application to adults means approaching them through their activities and helping them to remove their shortcomings.[43] Its aim should be to arouse in them a desire to change their life for the better, to make it more active, healthy and moral, and at the same time it should build up their character, create self-confidence in them and develop in them a spirit of mutual cooperation.[44] This education is to be imparted through talks on their immediate problems while the teacher is participating in their work. There need be no emphasis on the teaching of reading and writing.[45]

A more practical method in the present circumstances would be of evening classes for an hour per day, where every type of knowledge needed in practical life would be orally imparted. Talks in these schools would be linked up with agriculture, village industries and other aspects of village life. Children may also attend these classes for general knowledge.[46]

Regular Education

This education is divided into four stages, which in the language of Nai Talim are : Pre-Basic (Nursery and Kindergarten), Basic (Primary and Junior Secondary), Post-Basic (Higher Secondary) and Higher Education. The present day Sarvodaya thinkers have expressed their ideas about all of them, though they have mostly concerned themselves with the first three, and of these too specially with the basic stage. While laying down some general principles applicable to all the stages, they have expressed specific ideas about each one of them in the light of these principles, and it would be better to deal with them in that very order.

(*a*) *General Principles* : Thet wo old fundamental principles of Nai Talim are correlation and self-support. Correlation, according to Vinobaji, has a double meaning,

namely, coordination of knowledge with life experiences and of the aim with the means. The former means that teaching is to be correlated with life, while the latter signifies that both the aim and the means should be pure so as to be conducive to the growth of truth and non-violence in the pupils.[47] This principle of correlation as applied to the field of curriculum implies that Nai Talim must provide complete knowledge of all that is basic in life.[48] Vinobaji says, " Give the knowledge that is needed today; see that your student becomes capable of learning for himself whatever he may need in future, call into play his own latent inner powers. "[49]

The second principle of self-support is interpreted by Vinobaji to mean : Education for self-sufficiency up to sixteen; education through self-sufficiency after sixteen.[50] It also implies that education must make students capable of earning their living on entering life, to acquire self-reliance and control over their senses.[51]

There is also a third principle, which has been repeatedly emphasized by Vinobaji and it is of the freedom of education and the teachers from the control of the government. He is vehemently opposed to this control because it involves the danger of regimentation of thought and is bound to affect adversely the prestige of the teacher, who is expected to enjoy the confidence of the people and play the role of a trusted adviser to them.[52] It might further be stated that external control and revolutionary spirit will go together and that the whole process of education demands a flexibility of approach both regarding method and contents. Hence what he advocates is control by the public itself.[53] As a transitional measure, it is suggested that three types of schools may coexist, viz., national schools run by the state, Nai Talim schools supported but not controlled by the state, and fully independent schools neither aided nor controlled by the state. Even the teachers of state schools should have freedom to modify the curriculum in accordance with the needs of the situation.[54] It is envisaged that ultimately all educational schools would come to be managed by the people themselves.

All this means that in Nai Talim, the teacher has to play a very important role and therefore he must be well qualified for it. As a matter of fact, no system of education can ever minimize the importance of the right type of teachers, but it is all the more so in Nai Talim which stands for a way of life and in which the teacher has been truly assigned the role of a society builder. He can only do so if he reflects the new values in his own life and hence he must have all the qualifications laid down for a constructive worker. Vinobaji is of the opinion that persons with good experience in various walks of life and past the age of a householder would make very suitable teachers.[55]

He is further of the view that in the context of Indian conditions the whole education should have a rural bias so that the villages may prosper and the urban people may keep the interests of villages in their minds and cooperate with the village people.[56] He does not differentiate between boys' and girls' education because he holds that for the most part they need the same kind of education. Girls must be taught to earn their living, while boys must be educated in domestic science.[57] He also favours coeducaiton at all stages, though he would not insist upon it after the age of fourteen. In this matter he is more liberal than Kaka Kalelkar who does not favour coeducation at the secondary stage, because of the unsuitable social atmosphere and the dearth of suitable teachers.[58] In case there is coeducation at the post-basic stage, separate additional instruction thought desirable for a particular sex can be imparted in separate hostels.[59]

These are the general principles enunciated by the present thinkers, specially Vinobaji.

(*b*) *Pre-basic Education* : It is concerned with children whose ages range from two and a half to seven. It is expected that in a fully developed society families would be so enlightened as to eliminate any need for this education outside home. But as long as it is not so, provision has to be made for it.[60] The object of such education should be an all-round development of the child and his preparation to shoulder up the responsibilities of the new society.[61]

The subjects around which such education should be centred are physical development, health and cleanliness, self-reliance, social education, games and physical labour, language, development of mathematical sense, etc.[62]

The foreign systems of infant education are not favoured because they are too costly and unnatural in Indian conditions. The material needed should be such as can be manufactured in the village itself. Women teachers are preferable at this stage and the medium of education must be the mother tongue.[63]

(*c*) *Basic Education* : It is only next in importance to adult education and is meant for boys and girls of age from seven to fifteen. Gandhiji had advocated it for a period of only seven years, from seven to fourteen, but the present tendency is to extend it up to fifteen.[64] This education is generally to centre round a basic craft, but what is really aimed at is correlation with life itself and hence any knowledge related to life can even be imparted without the help of the basic craft in the context of some other life situation.[65]

Care has to be exercised in the selection of the basic craft. The craft chosen should ensure an all-round development of the pupils, provide a wide field of correlation and train them in some skill whereby they may be able to earn their living.[66] It should not be such as to go against truth and non-violence. That is why Vinobaji does not favour ' fishery ' as a craft, for it involves practice of deception to catch fish. In this matter, however, Kaka Kalelkar does not agree with him. He would not object to its adoption as a basic craft.[67] In the opinion of Vinobaji, agriculture would not be a suitable craft at this stage, while spinning would suit some eighty per cent of the schools.[68]

The pupils should be able to acquire in these seven years good command of some one language, power to calculate accurately for practical needs and good skill in some craft. They should also get familiar with fundamental principles governing human life and acquire some knowledge of philosophy, religion and ethics, the distinguishing features of their own and other societies, the

basic concepts of science and of the laws of hygiene and health.[69] The teaching of any foreign language like English is not approved of at this stage at all.[70] The medium of teaching should be the mother tongue.[71]

The views of these thinkers are interesting with regard to the teaching of history and the imparting of religious education. Their general attitude is to condemn the present teaching of history, which is not written objectively and which only creates prejudices besides burdening the mind for nothing. K. G. Mashruwala says, "No doubt, the present life of man is a result of the past, but what we need is to examine the present and to find solution for its problems without being enslaved by history."[72] It does not, however, mean a total ban on the teaching of history. Vinoba would certainly like the history of the better side of man to be presented. He says, "To progress we must catch the essence of history and give up the non-essential. It is not implied that history has no use at all. It can do good, but society would not progress if the past comes to influence us. In the past men have done both good and evil. Why should all of them burden our minds ? We should accept the good things and give up the bad ones".[73] As regards religion,its direct teaching is not favoured.It might, however, be taught indirectly through literature and social studies. Above all, sucht eachers as observe morality in their own life should be appointed. Their life would be an object lesson to the pupils.[74]

Corporal punishments, which violate non-violence, are tabooed. They are objected to for exhibition of anger, for inducing fear in the child, for teaching him to identify self with the body and to do something out of fear only.[75] Rewards too are not favoured, but competitions are permitted to create zeal and the issuing of certificates is allowed.[76]

The trend of these thinkers is against the so-called 'cultural activities' in the schools, and I thinkt hat it would also apply to colleges. Sri K. G. Mashruwala doubts if the real joy of life lies in them, and Vinobaji, while admitting their place in the life of man, does not want them to

overshadow the real purpose of education and to make us forget that hunger and starvation stalk this land.[77]

(*d*) *Post-Basic Education* : It is a continuation of the Basic education and is of three or four years duration. It is expected that a time would come when all the boys and girls would acquire it.[78] The technique of education at this stage would be the same as at the earlier stage, but there would be greater emphasis on the self-supporting aspect.

A post-basic school is to place before students a living picture of an ideal community life and inspire them with a keen desire to realize it in the whole society. Naturally then, education at this stage is to be so organized that the needs of the whole school community are met by its own cooperative efforts.[79] The public and the government have only to provide land, equipment and capital to ensure productive employment for all the students. In these circumstances the craft selected, besides providing for an all-round development of the personality of the students, should be such as to provide for some primary need of men and full employment to a student so that he may be able to adopt it as a profession in future.[80] However, in view of the importance of food production, every student must participate in agriculture throughout this course irrespective of his special craft.[81] The medium of instruction at this stage should be either regional or state language.[82]

(*e*) *Higher Education* : It is meant for students who are eighteen plus. Vinoba would like to provide it in every village though it may be only in a few subjects.[83] These institutions are to be completely self-supporting regarding expenses of the students and salaries of the teachers.[84] The medium of instruction, except in all-India institutions, would be the regional language. But teachers from other regions would be permitted to lecture in the national language if they so like.[85]

Sri Dhirendra Mazumdar has suggested that factories and workshops should be converted into technical institutions with students as workers and the teachers as experts and engineers.[86]

Appraisal

All these ideas regarding the system of education are based on the ideas of Gandhiji, and for the most part they constitute a further elucidation and extension of those ideas and their application in the context of today. All these are rather matters of detail than of any new principle. They concern all stages of education. The most remarkable suggestion of Vinobaji is about girls' education, which he is loath to distinguish from the education for boys. The problem of state control over education did not so much draw the attention of Gandhiji. Vinobaji is rightly allergic to state control in view of the great danger of regimentation of thought that may result from it. Such independence agrees with the whole concept of a state-free society, and with the observance of truth and non-violence in society. Some of the ideas here may seem to the conservative a bit fantastic, but logically there is nothing wrong about them. What is rather to be considered is if there is anything wrong about the very philosophy and technique of this Nai Talim.

It has been criticized by many and for diverse reasons. First, it has been said that it lacks psychological foundations in that it ignores the laws of the development of child's mind. Of the three aspects of human nature, it emphasizes only the conative aspect, completely neglecting the affective aspect and piously hoping that the students will anyhow be trained in the cognitive aspect. Secondly, it is absurd to hang all knowledge on the peg of a single craft. Thirdly, it ignores our national genius in that the craft-centred education lays stress on wordly pursuit, something alien to our ancient ideals. Lastly, it ill suits contemporary life for the whole concept of Nai Talim goes against the country's policy of industrialization.[87] Sir Mirza Ismail had even characterized it 'a retreat from civilization'.[88]

These various objections do not stand the test of scrutiny. First, teaching through craft has the support of many recognized psychologists and educationists, e. g., John Dewey, Stanley Hall and T. P. Nunn. While

the present system is lop-sided, Nai Talim leads to a harmonious development of all the three–the head, the heart and the hands. Secondly, craft is not the only basis for correlation. As already explained, Nai Talim fundamentally stands for correlation with life, and any knowledge necessary can be imparted through any life situation. Thridly, it is not this education which ignores our national ideals and genius but the present education. No proof is needed for it. Lastly, in spite of its stress on village occupations and industries, Nai Talim should not make a boy misfit for the life of an industrialized society. The manual dexterity that he would pick up in such a school and the scientific knowledge that he would acquire there about his tools should make him more capable of playing his role even in an industrialised society than the bookish education of the present schools.[89]

The fact is that the case for Nai Talim is a very strong one. Besides its superiority as a technique of education, it is also commendable on moral and sociological grounds. Alfred Adler has emphasized the importance of manual training for disciplining the will,[90] and Adolf Ferriers writes, " Manual work better than anything else permits collaboration, from which grows the sense of social solidarity and of its value to the world. "[91] To combine education with work is the best means of bringing about a classless society and it is because of it that it finds favour in communist countries.[92] In Nai Talim this process is deeper for it does not merely combine education with work, but it is education through work. Thus it is an integrated process. If the western democracies have not combined work with education in spite of the support of educators in their own countries, it is because the necessary social atmosphere has been lacking there due to capitalism.

It may still be asked why it is then that the Basic Education introduced by state and central governments in various parts of this country has shown no life. It is due to several causes. First, this education has not been seriously adopted because its social philosophy has not been

accepted. The result is that the official hierarchy has diluted it making it 'an imperfect experiment of an incomplete educational programme'. Secondly, this education has only been thought fit for rural and unintellectual children. Thus it has been branded inferior. Thirdly, the teachers themselves have had no faith in the principle that knowledge can grow out of activity and therefore have lacked the necessary enthusiasm so essential for the success of a new system. Fourthly, there is the heavy weight of inertia which is always encountered by anything new. Lastly, the people who count in 'public opinion' have some vested interest also in the continuance of the old system. All these factors have deprived Basic Education adopted by various governaments of its life.[93]

(C) PLANNING

Proper planning is implied in an attempt to build up a specific type of society by conscious efforts. However, the nature of the plan and the dynamics of its programmes depend on the nature of the society aimed at. In a broad sense, planning must concern itself with every aspect of social life; but since the economic conditions are one of the most important determinants of individual and social life, it is the economic development which is planned keeping in view other considerations as well.

Inspired by the example of Soviet Russia, the Indian National Congress had appointed a National Planning Committee in 1937 to prepare a blue-print of a systematic and comprehensive plan, but it was only after the attainment of independence that the Government of India could think of actually embarking on a plan. It was in this context that the Sarvodaya thinkers put forward their conception of planning in 1950 through 'Principles of Sarvodaya Plan', and then elaborated it in 'Planning for Sarvodaya', published in 1957. Besides these two reports, the Sarvodaya thinkers have also expressed themselves individually either by way of explaining their own positive ideas or by criticizing the principles and the working of the official plans. But there has been no attempt so far to provide any blue-print for a Sarvodaya plan, for

Sarvodaya 'is a growing idea and has not yet been forced into a strait jacket'. Still enough has been stated to explain 'the principles that should guide a Sarvodaya Plan and the methods and programmes of the transition to a Sarvodaya social order'.[94]

Principles of Sarvodaya Planning

The general trend in planning today is to lay stress on the utmost development and exploitation of natural resources because of the belief that man's development is dependent on the development of his environment. Thus planning has come to mean raising the standard of living of the people as much as possible. But the Sarvodaya appraoch is different. Its primary principle is 'respect for life', which implies an all-round development of the life and personality of living beings—of the animals as well to the extent they have become part and parcel of human life. Development of natural resources is to be treated only as a means to that end.[95] K. G. Mashruwala writes, "Other considerations apart, our national regeneration cannot be achieved merely by heavy economic reconstruction. The moral regeneration of our country on solid foundation is even more important and basic than economic reconstruction. The latter should follow step by step in the wake of the former".[96] Human and ethical considerations predominate in Sarvodaya over purely economic considerations, and its economic planning centres round the four principles of decentralization, self-sufficiency, simplicity of life and cooperation. The aim of Sarvodaya planning is 'to remove the impediments that stand in the way of the establishment of an equalitarian non-exploitive and decentralized economic and political order'.[97]

Thus the Sarvodaya approach to planning is essentially human and democratic. It is human because its first postulate is to provide employment to all. Vinobaji says, "To give work to a few only in the name of efficiency is not 'national planning' but 'partial planning'."[98] Secondly, it pays special attention to the sorrows and sufferings of the 'last man' before attending to the wants

and requirements of others. It has been said in 'Planning for Sarvodaya' that any plan that seeks to achieve a real betterment of the standard of living of the Indian masses would have to concentrate on 92.6 p. c. of the population that today is below the income level of Rs. 3600/- per annum.[99] A more attractive suggestion is to raise first of all the standard of living of the lowest strata of society and bring it to the level of next higher group and then raise the condition of this whole group to the next higher one and so on.[100] It is democratic firstly because it aims at a decentralized economic and political order, and secondly because it would be planning from below in its formulation and implementation. The unit for planning would be the *panchayat samiti*. Plans for individual villages would be prepared by the respective village *panchayats* on the basis of their resources, and it would be one of the functions of the *panchayat samiti* to coordinate the plans of village *panchayats* and unite them into a bloc plan. Similar function would be performed by the *Zila Parishad* (District Council), the State Planning Authority and the National Planning Commission. The planning organs at each level would have the necessary authority to undertake all surveys and conduct such training as would be necessary to draw up the plan, and the regulatory authority to facilitate its effective execution.*[101]

Objectives of A Sarvodaya Plan

The first objective, as already indicated above, would be 'to provide full and integral employment to every member of society', and for this purpose the industrial structure would be refashioned to increase production while maximising employment. It is envisaged that this full employment in a Sarvodaya society would be for the most part self-employment, and in industries where this

* E. F. Schumacher, however, suggests that the proper planning unit would be the district, since the criterion for the choice of size should be cultural and not economic. The unit should be large enough to sustain an institution of higher learning. (Bhoodan, 27.5.1961, p. 42)

is economically and technically impossible, one of co-operative, social or mutual employment.[102] The second objective would be 'to ensure that every member of society receives an optimum of material requisites of well-being essential for the development of his personality and for enabling him to make his creative contribution to the welfare of society'.[103] Sarvodaya, while not believing in the limitless multiplication of wants, does believe that the vital standard of living must be guaranteed to the people to ensure peace, stability, justice, equality and non-violence. Therefore the plan would provide for the production of as much of essentials as would be needed for that standard.[104] Thirdly, since Sarvodaya aims at regional self-sufficiency, the plan would 'aim at maximising self-sufficiency in the elementary needs of man in every village and region, to the extent that considerations of geography and the limitations imposed by the availability of natural resources permit'.[105] Lastly, it would "ensure that techniques and instruments of production are not such as to seek to increase material well-being by adopting a predatory and vendalistic attitude to nature, but are such as to instil reverence for life and keep the needs of the whole of humanity including posterity in mind".[106] Therefore attempts would be made to replenish, as far as humanly possible, the natural resources utilised, and to protect and provide for all life that revolves round man and his social, economic and cultural pursuits.[107]

The Sarvodaya Plan

Keeping the above points in view, Sarvodaya has indicated the lines along which village communities and regional planning councils may formulate their plans in regard to agriculture, animal husbandry, industry, banking, currency and insurance, trade, transport, labour and industrial relations, education, health and hygiene, taxation and financing of the plan. Its schemes are in line with the society it desires to reconstruct. It would end all private property in agricultural land, mines and mineral resources. It shows preference for cooperative farming

on voluntary basis, for intensive and mixed farming, and for such agricultural machines as would avoid drudgery and increase efficiency without leading to centralisation, unemployment, exploitation and impairment of the quality of the soil. Farming in the village would conform to the crop scheme formulated by the village community. The relation between animal husbandry and agriculture being very intimate, the plan would lay emphasis on the improvement of breeds, cultivation of nutritious fodder, establishment of *go-sadans* (cow-homes), provision for veterinary facilities, etc. Its industrial policy would substitute co-operation and self-employment for competition and centralized large-scale production. It would not leave banking and insurance in private hands, and all trade would be in the hands of cooperatives. If in the initial period, private trading operations are allowed, the village community would issue licence for it and would ensure that the trade does not lead to exploitation. Its transport policy would aim at making village accessible in all seasons, at linking them with one another and with towns and industrial areas, and to facilitate the growth of village industries. According to it, the state and the community would make use of moral compulsion, taxation, death duties, etc. to ensure progressive reduction in economic inequalities. Its education would inculcate correct attitude towards manual labour and society. It would be education for life through life, and free from state control. The plan would provide all possible facilities for the prevention and cure of diseases, and utilise for it all systems of treatment. It would prefer direct taxes to indirect, and would vest the right to levy and realise them in the basic units, while the state governments and the centre would get a part of that revenue. But they will have additional sources of revenue as well. Lastly, it would finance the plan by its own efforts and bonafide unconditional foreign aid.[108] Such in a nutshell are the fundamenals of a Sarvodaya plan.

Appraisal

All this is in perfect accord with the ideas of Gandhiji, the spirit of real democracy and the conditions prevailing

in India. Pyarelal tells us, "Gandhiji too had a philosophy of planning. But it was planning from below by the people of their own lives in the way they thought best; not execution of blue-prints of what others thought to be best for them. Under it not the cities but the villages held the key-position."[109] He further tells us that Gandhiji had an innate distrust of plans that related mainly to the future. He always weighed promises of 'jam tomorrow' in the scale of 'bread and butter today'.[110] All this is true of Sarvodaya planning as well. But it may be pointed out that what remained a mere philosophy with Gandhiji, has been given a more concrete expression by the present Sarvodaya thinkers, because the changed national situation demanded it.* The Sarvodaya plan would really be democratic because it would be no imposition from above. The people themselves would plan and execute. Of course, they would receive all guidance and help from above, but that does not vitiate the democratic nature of the plan. Lastly, the plan would suit Indian conditions better in that it would be labour-intensive and not capital-intensive. As it would consist of small plans worked by the people themselves, it would enthuse the people and give them necessary training and experience to make success of bigger projects. It would reduce economic inequality in society and give the benefit of increased national income to the strat of society which need it most. The present national plans in India are of a different variety. They are examples of the planning from the top and they are bureaucratic in nature. They seem to benefit mostly the well off people and thus to widen the economic gulf in society. They have completely failed to solve the problem of unemployment and under-employment in the country, increased our subservience on foreign countries, and possibly also mortgaged the future of the country for the economic aid received to finance the plans. Food deficit continues, while the new facitlities provided

* Sriman Narayan was the first to express systematically the principles of a Gandhian plan. He did it in 'The Gandhian Plan', published in 1944.

for irrigation remain unutilised. The plan instead of raising the character of the people seems to have deteriorated it further, and now corruption is more rampant than it was before. Many experts are of the view that the Community Development projects are not only doing no good, but positive harm.[111] Sarvodaya planning would not result in all this.

This is all true, but it seems that all this planning would demand a degree of centralisation incompatible with Sarvodaya philosophy. There are so many things to be done for the whole country and of such a nature that the higher planning authorities will have to plan much, and the States and the Centre will have to do much, and of it a great deal permanently. It is also doubtful if the lower units would be able to raise enough money for their purposes. Many important taxes would require uniformity in imposition and it would only be possible for the Centre to impose and realise them well. However, it must be admitted that such a planning would surely be much more decentralized in its formulation and implementation and at least check to a very great extent the present drift towards increasing centralization.

(D) SATYAGRAHA

Satyagraha in the general sense means the way of life of one who holds steadfastly to truth and dedicates his life to it, and as such any non-violent resistance offered for the vindication of truth is a part of it. But since the word 'Satyagraha' was coined as the name for the passive resistance movement conducted by Gandhiji in South Africa, it has popularly come to be identified with such resistance only and in this sense it had been a potent weapon of Gandhiji to demolish the old social structure in order to build up a new one. However, he himself acknowledged that he had not worked out 'the science of Satyagraha' in its entirety, and that others could join him in his quest.[112] Thus he left it to his successors to discover and experiment with other forms of satyagraha suited to their own genius, times and circumstances, and this is what is engaging the present Sarvodaya thinkers.

Conception of Satyagraha.

Conditions in India and the world have greatly changed since the days of Gandhiji. India is now free and enjoys a democratic constitution under which people choose the government and have freedom to propagagte their ideas. The top men who have been in power ever since Independence are old comrades of Gandhiji and their sincerity, patriotism and concern for the general well-being of the masses cannot be doubted. At the same time the most valued weapon of satyagraha "has become an orphan of anybody's adoption, for any purpose which an individual or group may fancy". Moreover, it is an age of atomic bombs and ballistic missiles, an age of greater violence and less cruelty, when the hand that drops the atomic bomb or sends forth the ballistic missile is not an actual witness of the horror and the destruction it perpetrates. Everything has to be done with cool thought and calculation. And lastly, it is an age of ideological conflicts, when the aim is to propagate one's own way of life and mode of thought.[113] All this seems to make the old forms of satyagraha of Gandhiji's times, which in spite of being positive in conception were negative in practice, unsuitable for today.[114] Hence the present thinkers, especially Vinobaji, are busy discovering a new technique and a new form of satyagraha which will be appropriate to the changed circumstances of today.

Vinobaji's search has taken him to the literal meaning of the word and the fundamental principles underlying it. According to him, satyagraha is a way of life and a mode of action, and only in special situations a method of countering or removing some evil.[115] 'Insistence on truth', which is the literal meaning of satyagraha, does not mean domgmatism but a readiness to understand and to accept the truth on the other side.[116] It, therefore, demands an objective attitude, an attempt to rise above one's predilections and prejudices. And since satyagraha relies not on physical power but on the superiority of moral and and spiritual strength, it must be inspired by love and compassion. It is not enough that there is no malice for

the opponent. The test of a good satyagraha is that its very news should inspire pleasant feelings in people in general and not fear or repulsion.[117] It has ever to be kept in mind that even as a method of resistance, satyagraha is not a mode of punishing, humbling and inflicting pain on others, but a method of converting them by appealing to their better self through a process involving self-suffering. Hence the more there is of love, friendship and compassion in it, the more effective it would prove.[118] Vinobaji is of the view that that form of satyagraha in which physical power and activity predominate is a crude form of satyagraha.[119] He considers his foot journey explaining his ideas to the people and inspiring them to appropriate actions to be itself a form of satyagraha.[120]

Thus to the present Sarvodaya thinkers, satyagraha is not a method of coercion, for coercion can only succeed in changing the outer form of society and not the man himself.[121] Hence if one form of satyagraha fails, recourse should not be had to a more severe form but to a milder and gentler one which will prove more effective in appealing to the finer feelings of men.[122] That is why Vinobaji is in search of a spiritual form of satyagraha. He says, "With the progress of science, we are called upon to go deep into the spirit. We are to reach even greater depths than those attained by men in days past. Science has brought it within the power of a few to destroy the universe while sitting in their own corners. We too have to develop the might of Satyagraha in such a way that we could cast our influence on the entire world."[123] And he further says, exhibiting some influence of Sri Aurobindo over him, "This power, however, we cannot acquire as long as we are confined to the limits of the mental world."[124] He has faith that this power can be developed through spiritual discipline.[125]

Vinobaji's conception of satyagraha is not of 'non-violent resistance', but of 'non-violent assistance in right thinking'. He is of the view that the primary aim of a satyagraha should be to assist the opponent to realise his

mistake and to correct himself. It is possible that to attain this very purpose satyagraha may have to assume at times a form of opposition or non-cooperation, but it is never to be forgotten that the primary purpose is of assistance in right thinking and it must not be defeated in any case.[126]

Thus the present thinkers do not totally reject the negative technique of satyagraha so much employed by Gandhiji. Vinoba has himself permitted it against ejectment of tenants from lands, against obscene cinema posters and for the enforcement of prohibition in some cities of Uttar Pradesh. His only criterion has been that "there is a field for Satyagraha where established values are disregarded. Should social leaders have differences on any subject, it cannot be made any excuse for Satyagraha. But it becomes one for popular education".[127] The Sarvodaya thinkers are opposed to the use of satyagraha for the purpose of class war, for the two are absolutely contradictory concepts since the former is based on the ideas of human brotherhood, non-violence and neighbourly love. It presumes that none is so depraved that he cannot be reformed through proper personal and social approach.[128]

Satyagraha in Democracy

All the present thinkers are thus at one in recognizing that satyagraha has a place in democracy.[129] What is only insisted on is that the negative form of satyagraha should not be used light-heartedly and without proper preparation of public opinion. Vinoba says, "Civil disobedience has a place in democracy; but we have to educate our people first to gladly accept the rule of law. Only then can we train them to break specific laws if need be."[130] He lays down that only he is entitled to satyagraha who has completely dedicated himself to the service of the people, who is a non-party man, who has already exhausted other constitutional methods without success and who has been left with no other alternative. Lastly, it must be preceded by a proper educational campaign.[131] He prefers such a satyagraha as while putting moral pressure on the other party would neither disturb

the proper functioning of society nor would adversely affect the character of the *satyagrahi*. His tendency is to avoid the negative technique of satyagraha as much as possible.

All thinkers disapprove of the method of 'fast unto death' though they would not discard it altogether in theory and practice.

International Satyagraha

Vinobaji and others hold that satyagraha can be used on international plane to solve international problems. But they do not seem to have discovered yet the precise form such a satyagraha should take. What they express are only a few scattered ideas about it.

It seems to them that the usual form of mass satyagraha can only be used, if at all, with much caution on international plane, for it presupposes an objective appraisal of the problem, which is extremely difficult when national interests are involved. That is why Vinobaji says, "If you aspire to solve international issues by recourse to Satyagraha then, keeping ourselves detached from State-power and from public opinion, we shall have to ascend to the supramental level".[133] One test of the correctness of one's cause can be if believers in non-violence from other countries are desirous of participating in such satyagraha.[134] Vinobaji is of opinion that barring a few exceptions, the citizens of a country which maintains an army have no right to conduct satyagraha in another country.[135] His tendency is to discourage grosser forms of satyagraha not only in the national sphere but more so for the solution of international problems. He thinks that the present age of ballistic missiles and ideological conflict demands a spiritual form of satyagraha, but he also admits

* An example of it is provided by Vinobaji's advice to the workers not to go on strike for better payments, but to accept one rupee less in their wages as a protest measure, and thus to draw the attention of the authorities and the public to their grievances. At the same time the path of negotiation and arbitartion was to be kept open (Bhoodan of 27.8.1960, P. 152).

that he has so far failed to discover it. He, at the same time, prefers to nurture the dissatisfaction of failure within himself rather than to feel satisfied by taking recourse to some crude form of satyagraha.[136]

Appraisal

Thus the present thinkers, specially Vinobaji, have attempted to evolve 'the science of Satyagraha' in accordance with the needs of the times. Generally speaking, Vinobaji disfavours the negative technique so much experimented upon by Gandhiji in his own days, but in doing so he does not depart from the master's principles. He only emphasizes that new times demand a new positive technique. His walking tours are only adoption of a method used by Gandhiji in Noakhali. He goes to the very fundamentals of satyagraha laid down by Gandhiji himself, and derives his ideas from them. His belief in spirituality and in the need of rising to the supra-mental level, though showing traces of Sri Aurobindo's influence, are not alien to Gandhiji. They are rather embedded in the culture of India. A few hours before his death, Gandhiji was asked by an American, "How would you meet the atom bomb with non-violence?" He replied, "I will not go underground. I will not go into a shelter. I will come out in the open and let the pilot see I have not a trace of illwill against him. The pilot will not see our faces from his great height, I know. But the longing in our hearts—that he will not come to harm—would reach up to him and his eyes would be opened."[137] In asserting his faith in spirituality Vinoba is re-echoing this very belief, while Gandhiji's ideal of *sthitaprajna* (the man of steadfast wisdom), depicted in the last eighteen verses of the second chapter of the Gita, implies the supra-mental level of Vinobaji.

His view of satyagraha in the context of Indian independence and democratic freedom to propagate one's ideas, have been very severely commented upon by Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. According to him, a man should ever be prepared to fight injustice and tyranny, and should develop it into a habit. There should be a sort of relay

race of the participators in civil disobedience, for it only can check the fall of men in authority. And this civil disobedience should not only aim at controlling the men in power but at supplanting them. He finds fault with Vinobaji for forgetting that one of the functions of satyagraha is also to remove the weaknesses of the people and for failing to understand the other side of the teaching of Gandhiji besides that of love, which is to fight poverty, dishonesty and tyranny.[138]

This attitude of Dr. Lohia is understandable since only the technique of satyagraha is acceptable to him and not the philosophy which inspired it. But his ideal of perpetual civil disobedience deserves outright rejection on pragmatic grounds, for, as pointed out by Professor M. Bhaskaran in his presidential address to 23rd Indian Political Science Association at Patna, " the idea of permanent revolution should not be allowed to become endemic for it breeds indiscipline and irresponsibility at the top and apathy and revolution at the bottom, while all the time it strains bureaucracy's power of endurance and survival ".[139] The proofs of it are visible in the apathy and disgust of the people towards the civil disobedience movements launched by Dr. Lohia's party and the tactics adopted by it. Had they not been resorted to so very often, they might have achieved some of their purpose. There may be occasions when such resistance may be needed to stir social thought and examples of it are provided by satyagraha against nuclear testing and bases, but then it must be started with all care and not frequently. Moreover, Vinobaji has by his walking tours set up a new technique of arousing people to a new social thought.

It may, however, be admitted that there is another argument hinted at by Dr. Lohia which has a great deal of force.[140] Some practice and the spirit of civil resistance to injustice in national sphere are essential if we want to meet any external aggression non-violently. Damping the enthusiasm of the people for resisting injustice, even though it may be in somewhat crude form, may have the opposite effect of either making them coward or violent.

But for all this what is wanted is neither a doctrine of perpetual civil disobedience nor of its total discard. If the present Sarvodaya thought seems inclined to the latter position, this is for three reasons. The first is the misuse of satyagraha in the post-Gandhi era ; the second is Vinobaji's own natural bent towards constructive work rather than agitations ; and lastly, as even an American scholar, Nenad Jeftanovic, points out, " In the context of Gandhian ideology it is very important to note that *Satyagraha*, or the pursuit of truth, is not wholly a method of resisting evil, but in the broadest sense a whole way of life, with definitely positive and constructive over-tones."[141] However, there is no total rejection of civil disobedience even by Vinobaji, and all that has been so far said does not amount to any final word. Neither Vinobaji nor the philosophy of Sarvodaya has yet got ossified. It is simply a search for a higher or superior technique and a warning against dogmatism and rigidity of technique. ●

CHAPTER IX

CONCLUSIONS

The preceding chapters have dealt at considerable length with the various aspects of the present-day social and political philosophy of Sarvodaya, and now little remains to be said in the final summary because several chapters carry their own conclusions. The following facts might, however, be mentioned at the risk of some reiteration.

Special Features of Sarvodaya

The present social and political philosophy of Sarvodaya is by common consent an extension and elucidation of Gandhiji's Sarvodaya philosophy, and its application to the present-day problems of the world in general and India in particular. It is still evolving and pruning its deficiencies when and as they are discovered. However, even as it is today, it represents, as Sri Jayaprakash Narayan claims, a distinct advance upon the existing social philosophies and systems.[1] It is a free and flexible ideology which welcomes and assimilates all that is good in others. It synthesizes the best in western democracy with the bes in communism, giving rise to what might be termed Sarvodaya socialism or communism within the category of 'humanistic socialism'. It preserves all that is valuable in the cultures of the past and accepts all that is valuable in modern thought and practice. And yet it represents no patch-work or even 'an intelligent combination of principles somewhat divergent'. There is an organic unity in the whole of this philosophy. Its philosophical postulates form the basis of its ethical principles, while the ideas of revolution and its process are in consonance with the principle of non-violence. The structure of society as envisaged and the process whereby the present society is to be transformed are fully consistent, as the preceding chapters show, with its basic ideas. Another unique feature of Sarvodaya is that it fulfils a great need of the

age. The world today requires both peace and revolution, and Sarvodaya appears to be the only idelology which gives hope of a peaceful revolution. Lastly, it is the only existing philosophy which holds a comprehensive view of the world transcending all barriers that separate man from man.

The Chief Contributions of Present Thinkers

The present Sarvodaya philosophy reiterates and develops the ideas of Gandhiji and at times clarifies at length what was merely implied therein. It restates belief in God, and, what is really more important, it identifies that belief with faith in the goodness of man and with the service of humanity. It accepts his ethical principles, but lays greater emphasis on their social and positive aspects. It provides a further clarification to the principle of trusteeship as implying the abolition of private ownership, and the application of the principle of non-possession to public institutions is more pronounced in it. The philosophy of work and the principle of the equality of all religions find better elucidation in some of these thinkers. The post-Independence era imposed on them the need for a clear conception of revolution and its process, and they have stated it with great clarity and consistency. They present to us a clearer picture of the social, economic and political structures of Sarvodaya society. Gandhiji accorded women equality with men and tried to better their condition. The constitution of independent India has placed women on par with men, while the Hindu Code Bills attempt to translate into practice what has been accepted in theory. But much remains to be done, and it does not so much concern law as the climate of social opinion. Vinobaji has repeatedly struck at the popular view which regards women as inferior to and different from men in qualities and capacities. He advises women to break their age-old shackles and to take their place along the side of men by realising their spiritual nature. In all this Vinobaji at times gives an impression that he has concerned himself more with the position of women in society than Gandhiji. The present thinkers have brought clarity to the conception of social and economic equality, and in Vinobaji's

conception of economic decentralization, there is no ground at all for any misunderstanding in regard to the use of science in the methods of production. Unfortunately in the case of Gandhiji in spite of all his clarifications, obstinate critics continued to confuse his ideas with what had been written in 'Hind Swaraj'. These thinkers also give us a detailed picture of the organisation of production in the society of their conception. They have defined their views about state and its functions. They think in terms of a state-free society and of a welfare society instead of a welfare state. They uphold the idea of 'participating democracy', and, except at the lowest level, they prefer to treat regional communities rather than the individuals as units. By their advocacy of the principle of 'consensus of opinion' to arrive at decisions, they attempt to minimise the danger of majority tyranny over minority. They are more vocal in their denunciation of political parties, and their idea of partyless democracy, though consistent with the ideas of Gandhiji, is quite a new development. They have also suggested first steps for transition to the new type of democracy. Finally, they develop Gandhiji's technique and organisation of constructive work, and his ideas on planning and satyagraha. They have attempted to develop a technique and a theory of satyagraha more appropriate to a free democratic country, and all this is in accordance with the fundamental ideas of Gandhiji. It is at the same time true that in respect of the method of the realization of Sarvodaya, their ideas are more in the process of development and experimentation than they are in other respects, and even if they have been able to discover a method of constructive programme suitable for common workers, they have yet to devise a formula whereby they can assign proper importance to state and political actions in their methods. There is a great force in the arguments of thinkers both in India and abroad in respect of the danger involved in the neglect of such actions. Erich Fromm, who commands some respect among Sarvodaya thinkers and writers, says, " The transition from the present centralised state to a completely decentralized form of society cannot be made without a

long transitory period in which central planning and state intervention will be indispensable."[2]

The Need of Sarvodaya

The Sarvodaya philosophy of Gandhiji and of thinkers studied here is capable of meeting the greatest challenge of the age. The most urgent need of today is the abolition of war, but since 'peace without depends upon peace within', the elimination of war demands domestic peace within countries as well. The fundamental causes of war are psychological and sociological including economical, and it is impossible to separate them. Sarvodaya by laying stress on the goodness of human nature, unity of mankind, service of man, application of the moral principles considered valid for individuals to group life and inter-state relations, the non-violent process of change, social and economic equality, economic and political decentralization, tries to resolve the various kinds of tensions that disturb domestic and international harmony. It is capable of strengthening the forces of love, creativeness and joy of life. It has been said that the way out of the present crisis lies in the recognition that life is more than meat, more than economics, and that it is also spiritual.[3] Sarvodaya takes a whole view of man and emphasizes his spiritual nature. The very conception of Sarvodaya denotes going beyond the seeming conflicts of interests to a spiritual view of life. It strikes a happy mean between old 'spiritualism' which derided life and the prevailing materialism which totally rejects the spiritual.

The Question of the Practicability of Sarvodaya

However, a doubt lingers about Sarvodaya. Is it a practicable philosophy ? As an ideal it may be commendable, but can one forget the realities of the present ? It has been remarked of Gandhian philosophy that "it was neither with the age nor ahead of the age ; it was against the age".[4] Arguments that are advanced in favour of the above doubt are basically two. First, it is questioned if human nature is, to say the least, as good as is presumed by Sarvodaya. This presumption of the goodness of

human nature lies at the base of the very principle of non-violence and since it is not correct, the very foundations of a Sarvodaya society and the process of its realization are demolished. Secondly, the world is going the other way in the direction of economic and political centralization, and there seems to be no chance of the direction being reversed in favour of decentralization. To the first objection, the reply may take three forms. First, it may be reiterated that the Sarvodaya view of human nature finds corroboration in many independent thinkers and writers, and that experience testifies that 'nobleness enkindleth nobleness'. Secondly, man is capable of changing under the force of circumstances, and even Marx was aware of it when he wrote in the Communist Manifesto, "Finally, in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact, within the whole range of an old society, assumes such a violent glaring character that a small section of a ruling-class cuts itself adrift and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands".[5] And though Marx did not realize it, this small section, aided by the force of circumstances and the social atmosphere, can act as a catalytic agent to convert its class to the new way of life. Thirdly, even if it be correct that man is not good enough to give proper response, there is no other alternative today but to proceed on the assumption of his innate goodness. It is the only realism one can afford be it in the domestic life of a nation or in international relations. Lester Pearson truly observes, "The true realist is the man who sees things both as they are and as they can be. In every situation there is the possibility of improvement, in every life the hidden capacity for something better. True realism involves a dual vision, both sight and insight"[6]. Sarvodaya proceeds on this very assumption.

To the second objection that the present drift is on the other side and there seems to be no hope of reversal, the answer is that this objection does not take into account man's instinct for survival. It should not be surprising if on being convinced that its salvation lies in reversing the trend, mankind may change its course. And even if it

does not happen, those who think so have the duty of propagating their ideas and of working for the transformation of society. It is this spirit which inspires Vinobaji and his fellow thinkers. He says, "Fire merely burns; it does not worry whether anyone puts a pot on it, fills it with water and puts rice in it to make a meal. Fire burns and does its duty. It is for others to do theirs."[7] Hence what is really important is if the Sarvodaya view is correct, and of this there is no doubt. However, it should be clear that decentralization, economic or political, is no outdated principle. Political decentralization has found support among many western writers, though only a few of them would go to the length of Sarvodaya. Professor G. D. H. Cole went very near to Sarvodaya thought when he wrote, "I am neither a Communist nor a Social Democrat, because I regard both as creeds of centralization and bureaucracy, whereas I feel sure that a Socialist society that is to be true to its equalitarian principle of human brotherhood must rest on the widest possible diffusion of power and responsibility, so as to enlist the participation of as many as possible of its citizens in the task of democratic self-government."[8] Similarly, Erich Fromm writes, "The aim of humanistic socialism can be attained only by the introduction of a maximum of decentralization compatible with a minimum of centralization necessary for the functioning of an industrial society. The function of a centralized state must be reduced to a minimum, while the voluntary activity of freely cooperating citizens constitutes the central mechanism of social life."[9] Of economic decentralization less is heard of in the west though the idea of the despersal of industry is gaining adherents.* However, sociological studies in the west have shown the evil consequences of modern industrialism, and according to Wilfred Wellock there already "behind the facade

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* Among the western advocates of economic decentralization are Richard B. Gregg, Ralph Barsodi and E. F. Schumacher. The last is Director and Economic Advisor, National Coal Board, London.

Communism favours dispersal of industries. (Fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism, p. 816).

of a commercialized, vulgarized way of life one may feel the throb of a deep depression, perceive the shadows of harassing doubt and even a longing for the sweet fresh air of a simple, wholesome life ".[10] Hence as an Indian economist remarks, " Decentralists and not centralists are truly modern, truly progressive revolutionaries of the 20th century. Centralists, devoted to the ' cult of the colossal ', far from being progressive and dynamic are incredibly conservative and orthodox, about a century behind the times in their patterns of thought. "[11] Thus the decentralization of Sarvodaya is no index of a bullock-cart mentality but represents a progressive movement of the age, no matter how feeble it may be for the present. And even if Sarvodaya society is not realizable in its completeness, its picture has the value of an ideal. Gandhiji said in 1946 with reference to the society of his conception, " If Euclid's point, though incapable of being drawn by human agency, has an imperishable value, my picture has its own for mankind to live. Let India live for this true picture though never realizable in its completeness. We must have a proper picture of what we want, before we can have something approaching it. "[12] To reject Sarvodaya as simply an utopian dream is not only to deprive man of a noble philosophy but of one which he very badly needs today.

Gandhiji and after him Vinobaji have brought the wisdom of the east to bear upon the consideration of modern world problems with particular reference to India. The fundamentals of Sarvodaya philosophy and the outlines of the edifice built upon it are perfectly valid. Details can well vary, and in the practical task of the realization of Sarvodaya strategic retreats are not ruled out. Criticisms by those who differ serve as warnings. Keeping all this in mind, the thinker-workers of Sarvodaya are doing their best to realize their ideals, constantly analysing and appraising their ideas and practical programmes. Thus the evolution of the philosophy goes on. After all, it is only given to man to strive, and even if those who work for the cause of Sarvodaya do not succeed fully, they would benefit the world to the extent they are able to divert its present course. ●

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ABBREVIATIONS USED

B.	..	Bhoodan.
B. Y.	..	Bhoodan Yajna.
B. Y. Bihar	..	Bhoodan Yajna, Bihar.
Gandhi Marg	..	Gandhi Marg (English).
H.	..	Harijan.
H. S.	..	Harijan Sevak.
Sarvodaya	..	Sarvodaya (Hindi).
V. P.	..	Vinoba Pravachan.

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CHAPTER V

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CHAPTER VI

Sarvodaya Society—Its Social and Economic Structure

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CHAPTER VII

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CHAPTER VIII

The Realization of Sarvodaya

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CHAPTER IX

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